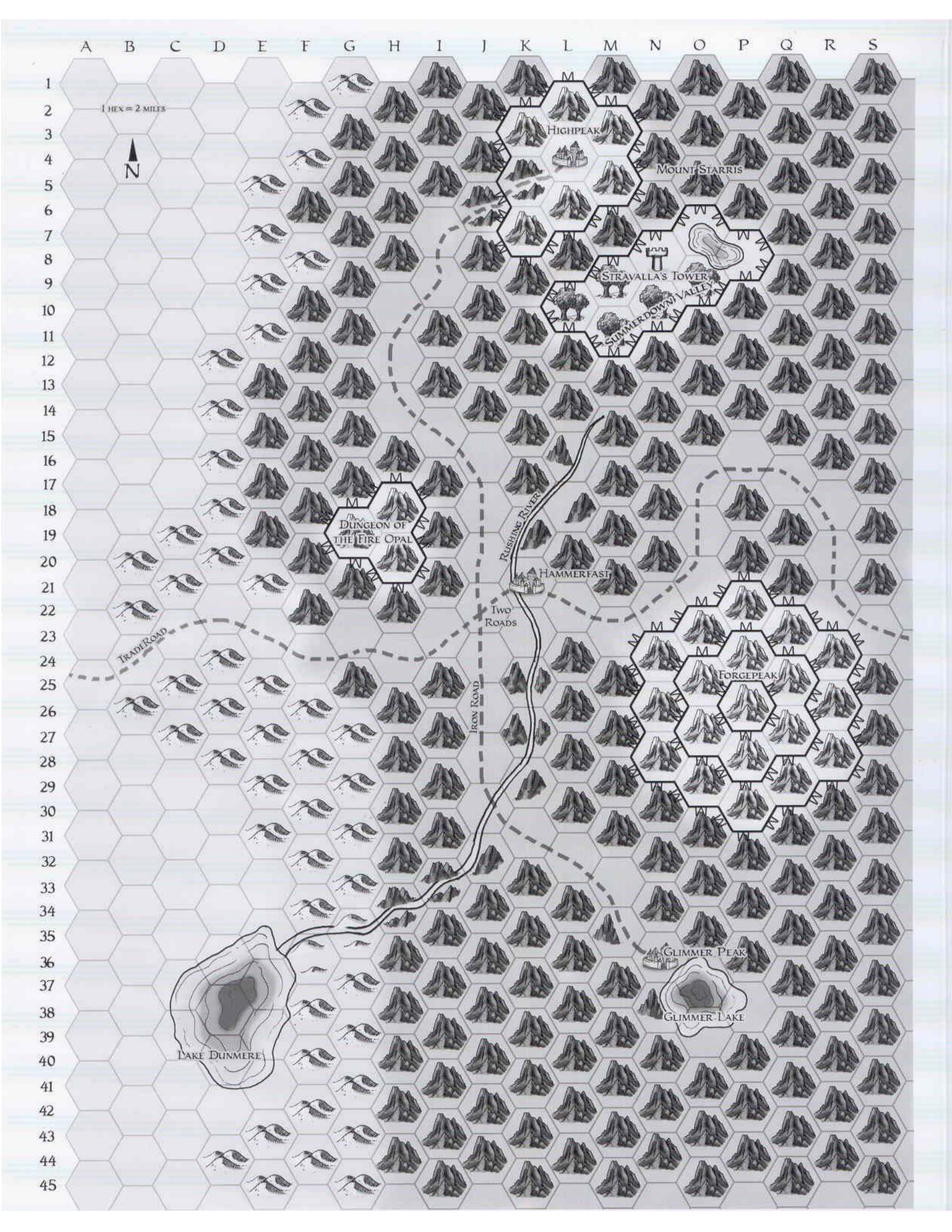
Dungeons & Dragons®

Hammerfast

A Dwarven Outpost Adventure Site

ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

Mike Mearls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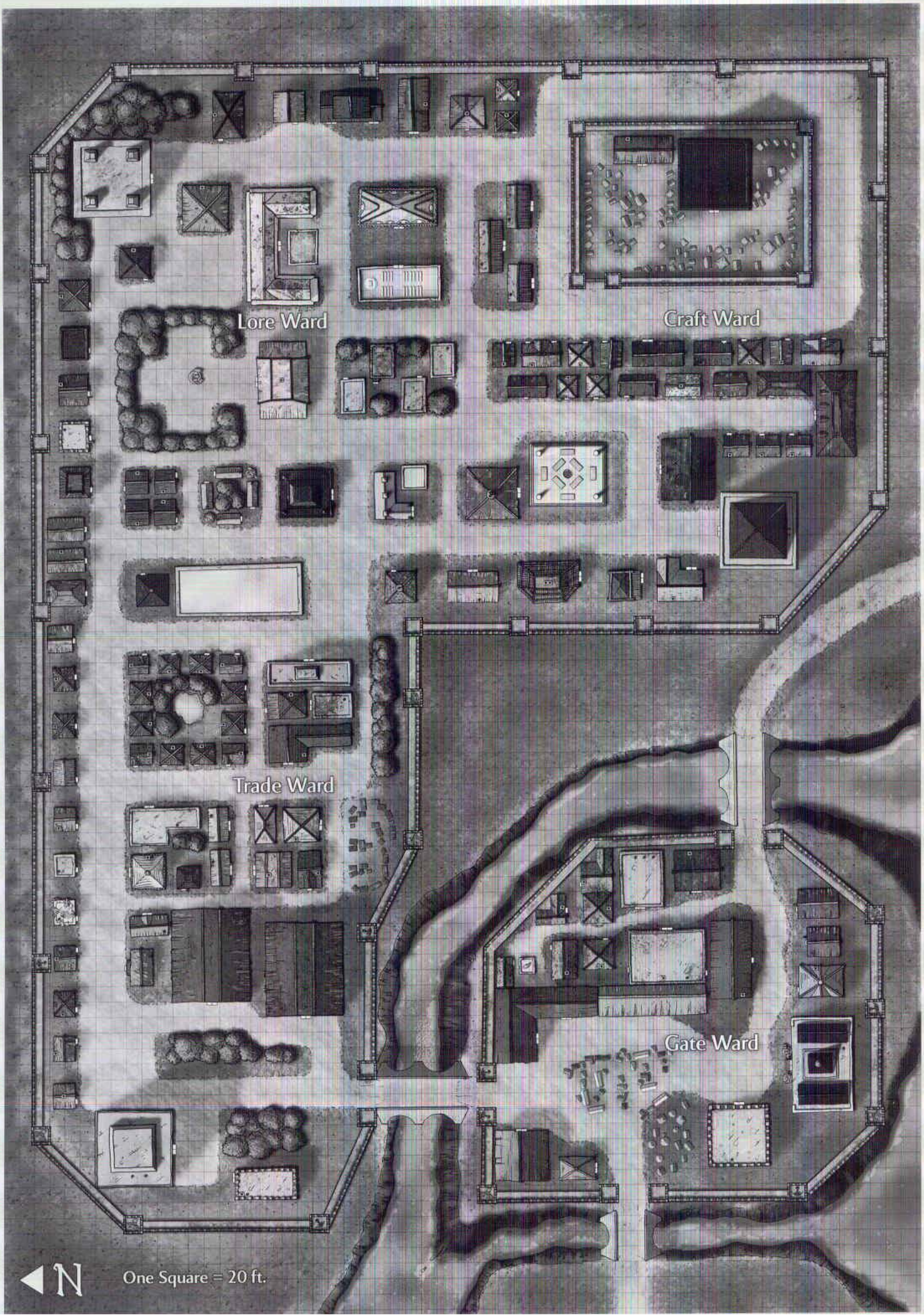
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45
1 hex = 2 miles
N
Highpeak
Mount Starris
Stravalla's Tower
Summerdown Valley
Dungeon of the Fire Opal
Rushing River
Hammerfast
Two Roads
Trade Road
Iron Road
Forgepeak
Glimmer Peak
Glimmer Lake
Lake Dunmere


Lore Ward
Craft Ward
Trade Ward
Gate Ward
N
One Square = 20 ft.

HAMMERFAST

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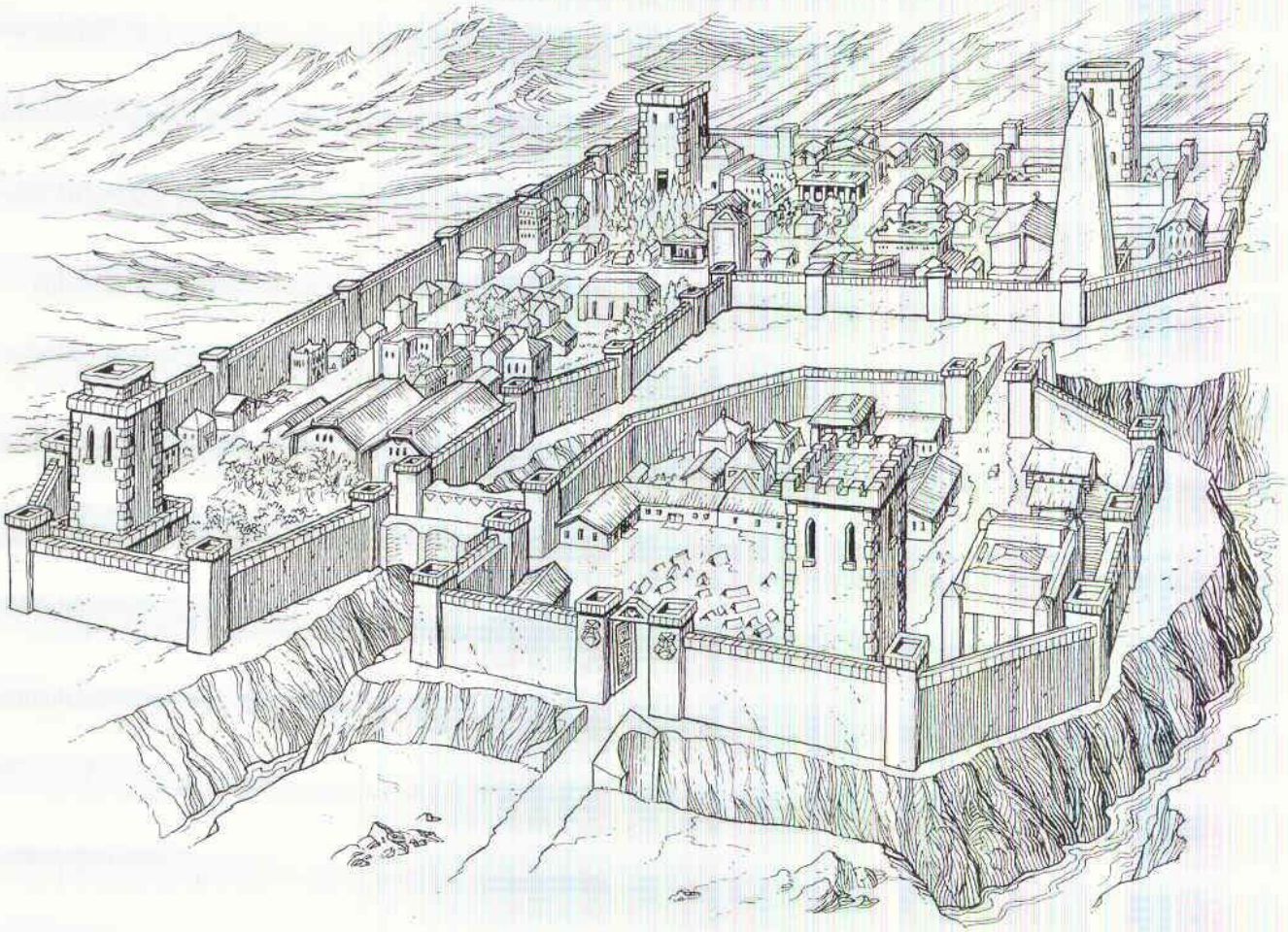

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Welcome to Hammerfast

"Assault on persons living or dead without provocation is grounds for prosecution."

- Warning posted at the Trade Gate, Hammerfast

History walks the streets of Hammerfast in the form of the dead, the dwarves and orcs who died in this place more than a century ago. They are now ghosts consigned to wander Hammerfast's streets until the end of days. Hammerfast was once a necropolis, a collection of tombs where the dwarf lords interred their people. As the dwarves' wealth grew, their burial chambers changed from simple stone sepulchers to lavish treasure vaults filled with the material wealth garnered over a lifetime.

Hammerfast transformed from a graveyard into a storehouse for treasure, and thus it became a target. A hundred years ago, the Bloodspear orc tribe conquered the necropolis but gained little from it. The orcs killed the priests and warriors tasked with guarding Hammerfast and started to loot the place, but the dwarves' burial chambers yielded their treasures only grudgingly. The necropolis held street after street of unmarked tombs, some riddled with traps, many empty, and only a few containing great treasure. The orcs suffered great losses to the defenses of Hammerfast and, after butchering its guards and capturing a few of its treasures, they turned their attention to easier targets in other locations.

In time, the dwarves returned to Hammerfast. Due to the fall of the Nerath Empire, the citadels of the dwarves were broken, famine and plague grew thick across the land, and monsters and raiders prowled freely. In the face of such chaos, the dwarves made a fateful decision. Why waste fortifications on the dead? They had no use for it. Thus, Hammerfast was transformed into a town of the living. It has since grown into the largest and richest settlement in the eastern portion of the Nentir Vale.

Yet although Hammerfast has changed, its past lingers on. The remaining sealed tombs stand untouched on pain of death by decree of the Town Council. Ghosts still walk the streets, some of them orc warriors slain in the Bloodspears' attack, others priests of Moradin or the necropolis's doomed guardians, and even a few of them dwarves laid to rest here long ago. Such creatures enjoy full citizenship in Hammerfast, as long as they observe its laws. In a sacred compact struck with Moradin and Gruumsh, the town's founders agreed to respect the dead and defend their resting places in return for the right to settle here.

Welcome to Hammerfast!

Using This Book

Hammerfast can be the glue that holds your campaign together, a town that you can use as a base of operations between heroic tier expeditions or as a ready source of urban adventures. Hammerfast provides a framework designed to accommodate a broad range of adventures and serves as a jumping-off point for your imagination. It also includes resources you can use to fill in details as you need them during a game session.

A Safety Net: Most of this book focuses on giving you a range of options rather than in-depth details. When you run adventures in Hammerfast, use this book to fill in the blanks that come up in play, allowing you to focus on plot and story. Lay out the map of Hammerfast when the adventurers enter the town, and allow them to explore the place as they like between excursions. If you have designed a dungeon or otherwise have an adventure location they need to visit, place it on the outdoor map in whatever place fits best.

A Campaign Arc: The stories this book sets in place can serve as the framework of a campaign that takes the adventurers from 1st to 10th level. The three villain groups presented at the end of this book provide plenty of opportunities for adventure, such as thwarting the renegade priests of the Circle of Stone or slaying the legendary dragon Calastryx.

An Idea Mine: Many of the descriptions of the nonplayer characters (NPCs) in this book include backgrounds and motivations that make them good sources of adventures. Use these NPCs to build your campaign or to tempt the adventurers into action.

Three Unique Traits

There are three points that make Hammerfast unique.

- Hammerfast is a town where the living dwell among the dead. The buildings are tombs and sepulchers, cleared of rubble and refurbished to serve as homes and businesses.
- Some of the tombs remain sealed. Their treasures are a powerful lure for adventurers, but raiding such a tomb is punishable by death. In some of the inhabited tombs, secret doors to forgotten passages and chambers await discovery.
- The dwarves must endure the presence of orcs. As part of the divine compact that created the town, Gruumsh demanded that his dead be honored, too, by a temple devoted to his power.

HAMMERFAST'S LEGACY

The compact forged between the folk of Hammerfast, Moradin, and Gruumsh created the foundation upon which the town rests. It shapes everyday life and influences the town's development. Of course, as with anything involving dwarves and orcs, it also creates a source of constant tension.

The Compact

When the dwarves first resolved to settle in Hammerfast, the priests of Moradin beseeched their god for guidance. The necropolis was once sacred ground, before the invading orcs defiled it.

A champion of Gruumsh named Tarrak led the assault on Hammerfast. He swore to Gruumsh to destroy the place and loot its treasures. Tarrak died in the assault, along with many other fanatical worshipers of Gruumsh. In Gruumsh's single, baleful eye, Hammerfast became a monument to his worshipers' ferocity.

With two competing deities laying claim to Hammerfast, only a compromise could avert a second war. Moradin and Gruumsh argued and threatened each other through intermediaries, until at last they reached an accord. Gruumsh had no use for the town, but he saw the chance to create a stark reminder of his champion's victory. He demanded that the dwarves set aside part of the town for his priests.

Moradin agreed, but as a condition of his assent insisted on a strict set of rules that both parties must follow. Gruumsh gained his show of defiance, and Moradin ensured that his followers would be safe from Gruumsh's treachery. The rules set forth were simple but inflexible:

- Worshipers of Gruumsh are not to be attacked or detained within the town as long as they do not commit acts of violence against Hammerfast's residents.
- Any priest of Gruumsh in the town must aid in its defense if it comes under attack.
- The ghosts that dwell in Hammerfast are to be left alone, as long as they do not attack the living.
- The temples of Moradin and Gruumsh are sacred ground. If either is attacked by the other, the gods will intervene.

The punishment for violating the compact varies. If a priest of Gruumsh is injured or detained, the dwarves must turn over a priest of Moradin for torture and execution at Gruumsh's temple. Any priest of Gruumsh that violates the compact is struck blind and exiled to certain death in the wilderness. The town guard enforces the law regarding the ghosts: Any attack on the undead is treated as an assault on a living citizen.

The final rule spurs much speculation. The exact nature of the divine intervention was never set forth, but most residents believe that the gods would send a cataclysm to destroy the town if this rule is broken.

Houses of the Dead

Although some of the tombs in Hammerfast were reduced to rubble by the attacking orcs, most were simply picked clean of their contents. The orcs smashed open coffins, pounded sarcophagi into rubble, and scattered remains across the necropolis.

The dwarves rebuilt Hammerfast, keeping as much of the necropolis intact as possible. Most homes and businesses use the same thick-walled, stone structures that once housed the dead. The interiors have been cleaned and reorganized. In some buildings, the original sarcophagi, murals, and other decorations remain.

In the summertime, some of the structures become unbearably hot. For this reason, structures in Hammerfast were built downward, not upward. Most families use the first floor of their homes as workshops or for storage, with the basement level set aside for sleeping. Most structures in Hammerfast house several families, each living within a subset of the chambers found in a typical tomb.

The tombs that remain intact are off limits. The town guard patrols the necropolis, and anyone caught looting existing tombs faces a death sentence. That doesn't stop some thieves, and rumors abound of tombs that were looted by thieves despite the vigilance of the town guard.

Many folk suspect that even the tombs now used as homes and businesses still hide ancient treasure chambers, hidden passages, and other secrets. Although looting intact tombs is against the law, tombs that have already been opened are fair game. Thus, adventure might be as close as the secret door beneath one's bed.

Ghosts of the Past

The ghosts of Hammerfast serve as a sobering reminder of its past. Although the ghosts are by no means numerous enough to crowd the streets, a resident of Hammerfast is likely to see a ghost at least once during the course of a week.

Most of the ghosts keep to themselves, avoiding contact with other creatures and content to simply reenact the last few moments before they died or the daily routines they followed in life. Other ghosts linger on for specific reasons. Telg and Kralick in Location 22 are examples of the latter type of ghost.

Ghosts sometimes have a task or another responsibility that they seek to complete. An orc might batter at the door of a sealed tomb, howling as the door remains standing. A dwarf might stand atop the walls, determined to maintain her position in the face of an endless wave of attackers.

A few ghosts, such as Grolin Surespike (page 13), take an active role in Hammerfast's governance. Here and there, a ghost follows a mundane trade, usually one that it can pursue despite its ghostly nature. The spirit of a smith might instruct young apprentices, or the ghost of a warrior might keep watch over the gate at night while the rest of the garrison sleeps.

The Guilds

The town's three guilds—the Trade Guild, the Lore Guild, and the Craft Guild—govern Hammerfast. Each guild elects three members to the Town Council. The Council then elects a High Master. The High Master serves as the town's executive, overseeing daily functions and managing affairs with other settlements in the Nentir Vale.

The consent of a majority of the Council is required to pass a law, and so the guilds constantly forge and break alliances in order to pursue their separate interests. The guild with the most influence over the High Master gains a further advantage in these maneuvers, since the High Master casts the deciding vote in case of ties. Marsinda Goldspinner, the leader of the Trade Guild, has been High Master for four years and shows no inclination to step down. The other guilds are content with this situation as long as the town continues to prosper.

Trade Guild

The other guilds rely on the Trade Guild to move their products far and wide. With its control over commerce, the Trade Guild is the most powerful group in Hammerfast. The Trade Guild maintains strong connections with other settlements, including Nenlast, Fallcrest, the Seven-Pillared Hall, and Winterhaven.

Lore Guild

The Lore Guild consists of professors, researchers, and sages. As the center of learning in the Nentir Vale, Hammerfast attracts students from far and wide. The economic and political advantages that accrue to Hammerfast as the intellectual center of the region contribute to the prestige of the Lore Guild.

Craft Guild

The Craft Guild is the largest guild currently active in Hammerfast. For years, the independent miners, prospectors, smiths, and other artisans in Hammerfast negotiated individual contracts with the Trade Guild. The Craft Guild was formed twelve years ago as a way of presenting a unified bargaining front. Since then, the Craft Guild has enjoyed a steady rise in power and wealth, and its membership continues to increase as the town prospers.

Holidays

Hammerfast celebrates four holidays tied to its history.

Dragon's Day

In the middle of summer, when days are at their hottest, the people of Hammerfast celebrate the defeat of the dragon Calastryx by the wizard Starris in a battle that took place nearly 300 years ago. The Trade Guild constructs an elaborate puppet of the dragon that stretches nearly 30 feet in length. The puppet leads a parade through town, while the folk of Hammerfast gather along the streets to throw rocks at it. Punching a hole in the puppet is said to bring good luck for the coming year.

The parade winds up at the temple of Moradin, where the puppet is cast into a pool of fire.

Siege Day

Early in the spring, the residents of Hammerfast set aside a day to remember the attack that devastated the town. The citizens return indoors by sunset, since walking abroad at night is said to bring terrible luck on this particular day. At midnight, a spectral horde of orcs rushes through the streets, reenacting its attack.

Founder's Day

When fall approaches, Hammerfast celebrates the last of the warm days with a great festival. Revelers don elaborate costumes and parade through the streets, and every family in town offers cakes, cookies, and other treats to passersby. Within their costumes, the rich and powerful mix anonymously with the common folk. The offerings of food between neighbors represent the town's unity.

Festival of the Eye

Although the tension between the priests of Gruumsh and those of Moradin always simmers, it never boils over. The Festival of the Eye provides an outlet for that tension. Each year, in the dead of winter, the priests of Gruumsh erect a massive tent outside Hammerfast. Champions of Gruumsh come from across the Nentir Vale to do battle in ritualized combat to establish their rankings. Although some matches are to the death, most end with one combatant unconscious.

In addition to these duels, the warriors of Gruumsh accept challenges from all comers. Priests of Kord, local roughnecks, and anyone else looking for a fight are welcome to take part. Matches range from one-on-one duels to chaotic brawls.

The festival lasts for a week. The priests of Gruumsh consider their champions' victories as important omens for the coming year. The priests of Moradin encourage hotheaded paladins and clerics to participate in hopes of embarrassing their rival priests.

SURROUNDING TERRAIN

The town of Hammerfast is located in the Dawnforge Mountains. A host of trolls, hill giants, ogres, and other creatures lurk among the peaks. In the aftermath of the Bloodspears' invasion, these monsters have grown bolder and more aggressive. Apart from the dangers of bandits and monsters, the rough terrain, perilous slopes, and bitter cold of the mountains surrounding Hammerfast present equally deadly threats.

WILDERNESS ADVENTURING

Navigating the regions around Hammerfast is an adventure in itself. The map on the inside back cover uses a hex overlay to make managing travel in the wilderness easier.

Note the letters along the top of the map and the numbers on its left margin. The letters and numbers allow you to refer to a specific hex by a letter and number combination. For example, Hammerfast is in hex K-21.

Each hex is 2 miles across. (Refer to page 261 of the *Player's Handbook* for information on traveling overland.) The entries below describe the geography of this region and its effects on adventurers exploring the wilds around Hammerfast.

When adventurers travel outside town, you can fill in the time they spend traveling with narration of their trip, the occasional combat encounter (such as a bandit ambush), or a discovery of something important to the campaign (such as ancient ruins or an NPC that needs help).

GEOGRAPHY

The land around Hammerfast is at best rugged, difficult terrain and at worst nearly impenetrable mountain slopes. Bitter winds sweep across the peaks during the winter. Although snow is relatively rare in the Nentir Vale's lowlands, it piles up among the peaks. The town closes down as winter sets in, with the dwarves content to toil in their workshops and other townsfolk hunkering down for a long winter.

In contrast, the summer months are hot and dry. Wildfires are a risk on the mountain's wooded slopes, and travelers without knowledge of local springs and streams should carry plenty of water when they venture out of the town. Luckily, the heat keeps most dangerous creatures in their lairs during the day, but travel by night carries a significantly greater risk of encountering monsters or bandits.

Dawnforge Mountains: Legend holds that the Dawnforge Mountains arose when Torog nearly erupted from the Underdark through to the surface of the world, and the peaks' steep slopes and rocky, forbidding facade support the tale. They stand against the sky, a wall of rock and stone bounding the Nentir Vale's eastern border. Most of the mountains are covered with evergreen forests, although the three most notable peaks in this region, the Sentinel, Mount Starris (named for the wizard), and Forgepeak, rise above the tree line.

Foothills: To the east of the mountains rise wooded foothills. Adventurers move at three-quarters of their speed in this terrain. It is home to goblins and orcs, although the monsters tend to stay clear of the Trade Road. Away from the road, travelers must take care. The humanoid tribes in this area are in a constant state of war with one another, and grisly markers (such as severed heads or piles of bones) lay out each tribe's boundaries.

Forgepeak: This massive peak (Q-21) towers over the surrounding mountains. Visible from across the entire vale, Forgepeak has never been scaled. The red dragon Calastryx slumbers within its lair hidden in Forgepeak. Thar, a dragonborn champion of Gruumsh (pages 23 and 30), seeks to awaken and bind the dragon.

Lake Dunmere: This body of water has a number of small fishing villages along its shores. A large manor house and village once stood beside Lake Dunmere, but both were destroyed by the Bloodspear orcs during their invasion. The ruins of the manor and village still stand, as do the cellars beneath them.

Rushing River: Few travelers use the major waterway in the region, because many monsters lurk along its banks and the difficult terrain makes patrols impossible. Bandits are the only beings who risk traveling by river, since it allows them to escape with booty while avoiding guard patrols.

Trade Road and Iron Road: Two roads cross the mountains in this region. Both are kept in good repair by the dwarves, although in the winter the constant snows make them nearly impassable. Adventurers can travel along the road at full speed. Although not frequented by the monsters that live among the hills, the roads are still a magnet for bandits and other threats.

Treacherous Slopes: Some areas of the Dawnforge Mountains are particularly forbidding. The map of the land around Hammerfast includes a few hazard lines between hexes. If adventurers move across one of these lines in the direction opposite the arrows, each adventurer must make a DC 17 Athletics check to climb these treacherous slopes. This check is in addition to any checks made to move at a faster pace.

LOCATIONS

Although the Dawnforge Mountains are largely an untamed wilderness, here and there stand bastions of civilization. In addition to Hammerfast, there are three other settlements in the area and two adventuring locations of note. The description of each place includes its hex location.

Dungeon of the Fire Opal (G-19)

The ruins of a monastery stand on the northern slope of the mountain in this hex. The monks of the Enlightened Flame once dwelled here, but they were slain by marauding gnolls more than fifty years ago. The gnolls came in search of a great fire opal, a gem said to contain the bound spirit of a powerful efreeti lord. The gnolls never did find the gem, but rumors persist of secret passages and tunnels within the dungeons beneath the ruins of the monastery. A gang of bandits led by Serlek Undertow (page 27) currently occupy the dungeon's entry chambers.

Highpeak (L-4)

Situated high on the slopes in this hex, Highpeak is the center of mining operations in the Dawnforge Mountains. The settlement consists of a small fortress cut into the mountain, well stocked with supplies and heavily guarded. A number of mines work veins of gold in the area, although the threat of monsters always looms over the operations. In addition, lone prospectors willing to brave the wilderness scour the land for new finds.

The miners of Highpeak eagerly hire adventurers to guard their caravans along the Iron Road or to defend their latest find. The proximity of Stravalla's Tower provides an everpresent threat, and more than one mining expedition has fallen to trolls or werewolves.

Glimmer Peak (N-36)

This small settlement is the center for mining in the area south of Hammerfast. Glimmer Peak sits along the shores of Glimmer Lake. Rumors persist that the palace of a fey lord long ago sunk beneath the lake. To this day, fishermen sometimes report vague images of a grand, ruined fortress deep within the water. The stories are true, and the ruins hide kuo-toas, undead eladrin, and fabulous treasures.

Stravalla's Tower (N-8)

Just south of Mount Starris, a valley cuts a scarlike line through the Dawnforge Mountains. Despite the summer heat or the bitter winter cold, a forest forever thick and lush fills this valley. Travelers smell Summerdown Valley long before they see it, as the blooming flowers cast a perfume on the wind.

Despite its appearance, the valley is a place of grave danger. A powerful hag, Queen Stravalla of Winter's Mourning, dwells within this place. In her crystal tower, she surveys the verdant garden that is her realm. Trolls, werewolves, and murderous fey heed her beck and call, and within the ever-verdant forest shamble the animated corpses of those who dared enter her realm. Clad in rusted armor and covered with sickly sweet orchids that grow from their decaying flesh, these sentinels make quick work of those who blunder into Summerdown Valley.

Two Roads (J-22)

This small outpost guards the intersection of the Trade Road and the Iron Road. The small, walled fort set on a peak overlooking the crossroads features a narrow path that winds its way from the roads to the fort's gate. A small number of dwarf warriors led by Grumbald Oleson dwell here. The dwarves rely on ballistas and catapults to crush intruders on the road. If sorely pressed, they dispatch a clay scout with a message to the main garrison in Hammerfast.

Grumbald is legendary for his strict adherence to orders. He refuses to allow travelers into the fort unless they allow him to draft them into the guard. He sets such visitors to work cleaning latrines, sweeping the stables, and otherwise handling the garrison's grunt work for a day in return for food and shelter.

Inhabitants

Although the heavily guarded roads in the region are mostly safe, this part of the world is still a dangerous place to wander. Orcs, giants, trolls, and worse lurk not far from Hammerfast's walls.

Bandits: A number of marauding gangs scour the peaks in search of folk to rob and terrorize. Use low-level humans, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes for these groups. Bandits prefer to attack from ambush. They sometimes pose as innocent travelers before attacking.

Weeping Skull Tribe: The orcs of the Weeping Skull tribe are clever, vicious marauders. Their symbol is a skull weeping tears of blood, and it comes from a strange idol they worship, a rock formation in hex S-10 that resembles a skull and that bleeds from its eye sockets. If this idol were destroyed, the tribe would fall as its religion collapsed.

Spider Goblins: These goblin clans occupy small, hidden outposts across the Dawnforge Mountains. Their leaders are masters of primal magic, and the clans train spiders as pack animals and war beasts. The spider goblins are most noteworthy for the helms they fashion from the eyes and skin of slain spiders.

Goliaths: Several bands of goliaths range throughout the Dawnforge Mountains. Most of the time, these goliaths wander above the tree line to keep clear of monsters and travelers. Once a year, though, they engage in a great race across the mountains. A non-goliath that completes the race becomes an honorary member of the clan.

Minions of Queen Stravalla: The trolls and werewolves of Summerdown Valley venture far and wide in search of fresh victims and treasure for their queen.

Other Monsters: In addition to the groups mentioned above, other monsters common to the region include ankhegs, blood hawks, dire boars, cave bears, hippogriffs, harpies, manticores, owlbears, gray wolves, and wyverns.

IMPORTANT FIGURES IN HAMMERFAST

The folk of Hammerfast make the town what it is. Hammerfast plays host to a variety of villains, heroes, and folk who fall somewhere in between.

High Master Marsinda Goldspinner

The High Master of Hammerfast and the leader of the Trade Guild is a tough, elderly dwarf who refuses to suffer fools. She speaks in a rapid-fire, direct manner, and she believes in action over words. In Marsinda's eyes, a good plan executed today is far better than a perfect plan implemented tomorrow.

Marsinda is popular among the common folk of Hammerfast and with many of the important movers and shakers in town. The dwarves appreciate her candor and aggressive bearing, and the nondwarves see her as a patron of sorts. Marsinda cares little for petty grievances, such as those advanced by the Circle of Stone (page 28). She would let an army of trolls camp in town if it was in the town's best interest.

Marsinda's hair is snow white, and she dresses in regal purple and sports a small fortune in jewelry. Her many admirers refer to her as the Lady of Gold; her enemies sarcastically refer to her as the Queen.

Lord Commander Tenkar Stoneshield

The leader of Hammerfast's town guard has earned respect, but the extended period of peace has proven toxic to his competence. Tenkar led several successful expeditions against goblins early in his career and earned his position based on his skill as a battlefield commander. During times of peace, however, he grows bored with his duties. Discipline is lax among the guards, and criminals and agents of the Circle of Stone have infiltrated its ranks.

Tenkar has the potential to whip the town guard back into shape, but until he sees a clear threat, he is unlikely to take any action. By then, it may be too late.

Loremaster Geld Seekingstone

The head of the Lore Guild long ago gave up on research and study in favor of politics. Geld is Marsinda's greatest rival, and he constantly seeks ways to undermine the High Master's authority. Geld, an opportunist, takes a great interest in hiring adventurers. One of the wealthiest people in town, he sponsors mercenaries to undertake expeditions against monsters. Any victories his hirelings achieve help establish him as a benefactor of the town, especially if he can avenge a looted caravan or track down notorious criminals.

Master Artisan Frelda Blackshield

The head of the Craft Guild was a compromise candidate, and it shows in her actions. Frelda hates politics and accepted the position only when it became apparent that the factions within the guild could agree on no one else. Her tendency to spend more time in her workshop forging weapons and armor than in her office negotiating with the Trade Guild has not helped the standing of the Craft Guild in Hammerfast's politics.

ISSUES FACING HAMMERFAST

Hammerfast, due to its location and history, is plagued by two chronic issues.

Food and other supplies can sometimes run short. Any threat to the town's food supply and stores presents a serious blow to the town's stability. Since Hammerfast was built as a necropolis, it lacks arable land to grow its own food. Particularly in winter, food panics can rock the town and lead to riots and worse.

Tensions between dwarves and nondwarves sometimes boil over into the streets. Most dwarves are content to allow others to live within the town, but the extremist Circle of Stone seeks to escalate tensions whenever possible.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR

Hammerfast is divided into four wards. Three of the wards are home to the major guilds in town, and the fourth, the Gate Ward, serves as a gateway between Hammerfast and the rest of the world. This section provides general overviews of each of the wards and describes locations within Hammerfast, along with information about NPCs linked to these locations.

The Gate Ward

Visitors to Hammerfast arrive at the Gate Ward, a small, walled-off section of the town that once served as the living quarters and garrison for the necropolis's living inhabitants. Today, the Gate Ward is Hammerfast's doorstep, a place where visitors and residents mingle to conduct business. A bustling market unites traders from the Nentir Vale with those from beyond the Dawnforge Mountains. The Hall of Justice reminds the folk of Hammerfast and all its visitors that the dwarves lack any tolerance for troublemakers and criminals, yet this neighborhood is also a haven for smugglers, thieves, and rowdies.

To many travelers, the Gate Ward is Hammerfast. They have no need, and probably lack permission, to enter the other wards.

The rowdiest and most chaotic of the wards, the Gate Ward is the ideal place to go if you're an adventurer seeking a job, a thief in need of a fence, or a hothead in search of a brawl. The town elders accept that some level of illegal activity is inevitable in any settlement. They just hope to keep it confined to the Gate Ward.

1. West Gate

Two massive towers flanked by steel doors reinforced by a portcullis control the ebb and flow of traffic through the West Gate. A squad of four guards watches this gate at all times. Visitors to Hammerfast are directed to the Revenue Hall, where they must register their goods and pay any appropriate fees for conducting business in the town.

Thora Longhammer, granddaughter of watch captain Korthak Longhammer, is sergeant of the guards at this gate. A one-time adventurer, she is a hothead with a bit of a vigilante streak. She gladly informs adventurers who have proven themselves as heroes about the comings and goings of folk through the gate. If particularly troublesome travelers enter the town, she might take it upon herself to ask adventurers to check them out. However, Thora is somewhat paranoid and her intuition is not to be trusted wholeheartedly. Her leads sometimes implicate innocent outlanders.

2. Revenue Hall

This plain stone building houses Hammerfast's tax collectors. Charged with assessing a 1 percent fee on all trade goods and treasure brought into Hammerfast, the bookish dwarves who work here have the tenacity of bulldogs and the manner of prosecuting attorneys. In their eyes, every traveler hides taxable goods until proven otherwise. They keep careful records, and have a reputation for honesty despite their demeanor.

Tathik Glodreddi is Hammerfast's head tax collector. This surly, bitter dwarf is an ex-adventurer who lost his comrades in an encounter with trolls near Summerdown Valley years ago. Tathik makes it his personal quest to squeeze every copper out of adventurers. Tathik is a member of the Circle of Stone, and he makes a point of assessing the taxes owed by Circle members so that he can allow them to bring weapons, magic items, and other goods into town undetected. Tathik does not realize that the Circle aims to destroy the town, and if shown decisive evidence of its plans he turns traitor against the Circle. He knows the identities of many of the Circle's agents and the items and goods they have brought into Hammerfast in recent months.

3. Guard Towers

A number of guard towers dot the walls of Hammerfast. Each tower is 30 feet tall, with three stories and a cellar, and each has a squad of six guards on duty at all times. The cellar holds supplies, such as dried food, water, and ammunition. The first floor features a kitchen, mess hall and lounge, the second floor holds living quarters, and the third floor and roof are used for observation. Each tower has either a catapult or a ballista atop it.

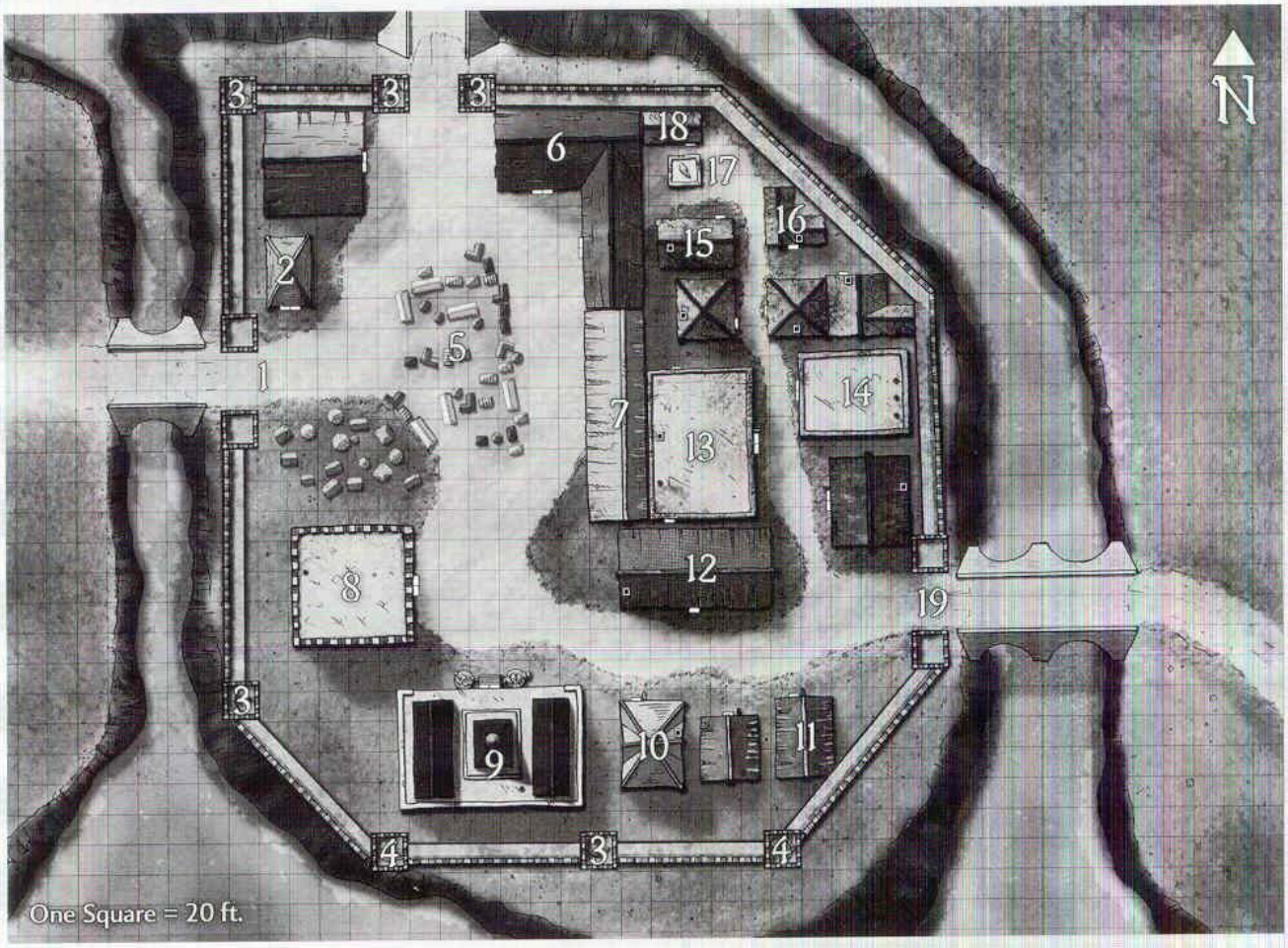
4. Empty Towers

Hammerfast was once much more heavily defended, as the long-ago dwarf halls of distant lands supplied warriors, weapons, material, and money to defend the burial grounds. Today, the town lacks the resources to staff each tower. The empty towers also each have either a catapult or a ballista atop them, but they have no guards assigned to them unless the town faces an attack.

For this reason, the empty towers are ideal meeting places for smugglers and thieves. A villain in need of a quiet place to cut a deal with adventurers, such as to exchange a hostage or sell a magic item, might choose one of these empty towers. The town guard is supposed to patrol the empty towers, but unless a high level of alert has been issued, only the most dedicated guards walk through them on a regular basis.

5. Gate Market

A number of colorful tents and stalls stand in this open area from early spring to late fall. Only in the winter, when snow chokes the Trade Road, does this place fall



quiet. Merchants from across the Nentir Vale, dwarves from Hammerfast, and visitors to the town crowd this location, seeking exotic goods and unmatched bargains. If it's produced anywhere in the region, it's for sale here in the market.

Old Gaff, an elderly dwarf, totters through the market on a wooden crutch. His left leg is withered and useless, the result, he claims, of an encounter with a mummy. In truth, he hurt himself trying to rob a burning warehouse in Fallcrest. Gaff seeks out neophyte adventurers in the hope of plying them with his collection of treasure maps. A few lead to small caches in the mountains, but the big score he has in mind is the fire opal hidden beneath the ruins of the Monastery of the Enlightened Flame (see "Dungeon of the Fire Opal," page 6). Gaff hooks his marks with a few useful maps and then asks them to accompany him to the monastery's ruins. Using adventurers as muscle, he relies on them to slay monsters and overcome traps before stealing the opal from beneath their noses. He keeps a well-crafted, fake fire opal (DC 26 Perception check to detect) hidden in a pouch for just such an occasion.

6. Warehouse

This warehouse holds the goods of merchants who stay in town for a short time. Merchants park their carts or stack their crates, barrels, and sacks in these warehouses for storage. A squad of at least five guards watches this place day and night. Local traders or traders staying for an extended period of time keep their goods in the Trade Ward to the north.

Ferdrin Fellhammer commands the guards who watch over the warehouses. He is a heavy drinker, and the thieves in town know that a few cups of wine or a full aleskin is enough to blur Ferdrin's watchful eyes.

7. Stables

This long, low building holds the horses and beasts of burden that belong to merchants visiting Hammerfast. One of the stalls houses a white mare left here almost a decade ago by an eladrin paladin. The eladrin has long since disappeared, but he left behind enough cash to keep his mount in food and water for another twenty years. The horse is in fact a polymorphed eladrin princess named Eldarea. Her tendency to kick at anyone who draws close to her is a sign of her frustration at her predicament. Her champion, the eladrin paladin Baldyr, died seeking a cure for her condition from Queen Stravalla (see "Stravalla's Tower," page 6). Adventurers who recover the cure and save the princess can look forward to a handsome reward from her father, a powerful lord in the Feywild, provided that they can escort the petulant, demanding, and spoiled young woman back to his Feywild estate.

8. Barracks

Town guards not assigned to a specific tower are garrisoned here. The barracks is a two-story building. The first floor features a mess hall, chambers for officers, and a kitchen. The second floor consists of a large dormitory. The cellar is filled with weapons, armor, and other supplies.

"Sleepy" Fennik is a gnome quartermaster for the garrison. He distributes food and equipment as needed to the guards. He's also lazy, as his name suggests, and an inveterate gambler. He's an excellent source of rumors about the town guard, since every equipment request passes his eyes. If the adventurers need to know where someone is locked up or if they want to track down a member of the town guard, Sleepy can help.

9. Hall of Justice

This imposing stone building has a broad flight of stairs leading to its double doors. Statues of Moradin—one depicting him as a smith, the other showing him garbed for war—flank the entrance. This two-story building has a court, holding cells for prisoners, and a hall of records for the town. Tax disputes, along with criminal cases, are tried here by the town's justice of the peace, a young dwarf named Beldrin Longbeard.

Beldrin Longbeard is a prodigy, a youngster who mastered the intricacies of dwarven law at a young age. He enforces the law upon grieving widows, crippled guard veterans, and prosperous merchants alike. In this capacity, he has managed to anger nearly every faction in town at one time or another.

The prison wing in the Hall of Justice consists of a dozen cells, each 10 feet by 10 feet, located in the basement. A stout steel door seals off the prison wing (DC 23 Thievery check to unlock), and the cells have excellent locks (DC 21 Thievery check). The locks are designed to break nonmagical thieves' tools on an unsuccessful Thievery check, and glyphs of warding trigger an alarm bell if any of the doors are opened without the correct key.

10. The Arcane Star (Inn)

This wooden, one-story building is painted a bright blue. The glowing symbol of a star hangs above the door. The Arcane Star has eight large rooms, six upstairs and two on the first floor, that cater to upscale travelers. The Star's rates are 2 gp per night.

Therai the tiefling and his wife **Nemeia** own this place. The two have some talent for magic and can perform any ritual of 3rd level or lower (assume a +8 bonus to any skill checks made as part of the rituals). They once traded in magic items, *residuum*, and similar goods, but decided to settle down. They rent rooms at half price to any arcane caster, provided that their guest is willing to sit and talk arcane theory over a bottle of wine in the inn's sitting room every once in a while.

Nemeia keeps a small library in the basement. She gladly allows guests to browse it. Among her books is the journal of a dragonborn paladin who once lived in Gardmore Abbey (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 206). Hidden in the journal's cover (DC 18 Perception check) is a map that shows the dungeons beneath the now ruined abbey, along with hints about the dangerous artifact said to be hidden there.

11. Boltac's Goods (Shop)

The dwarf **Boltac Glodreddi**, brother of the tax collector Tathik Glodreddi, sells adventuring gear such as rope, everburning torches, and ammunition in this shop. Everything listed under Adventuring Gear on page 222 of the *Player's Handbook* is available here at the listed price. In addition, Boltac can sell magic items of up to 5th level. However, he relies on a few mages in town to custom-make the items. He expects half the listed price for an item up front, 2d6 days to complete the item, and the second half of the price on delivery.

Boltac is grasping, greedy, and ambitious. He drives a hard bargain, and he sometimes tries to pass off shoddy or defective goods as new. If adventurers come to his shop with a lot of money to spend, he tries to add a 10 percent fee to any magic items he sells. If the adventurers balk at such a charge, he drops it but makes sure to let his brother know of the wealth they've accumulated.

12. Rondal's Inn

This austere building houses a cheaper alternative to the Arcane Star. **Rondal**, a dour human who makes a point of keeping his nose out of his guests' business, caters to merchants, travelers, and others who stop in Hammerfast for a short time. He offers 18 small rooms, each with two bunk beds, for a rate of 5 sp per night.

Tarras, an eladrin bard, performs nightly at Rondal's Inn, as well as in the Gate Market and at the Foundation Stone (page 21). Tarras also works with the bandit lord Carthain. He keeps a pet raven that he uses to send messages to Carthain, notifying him when caravans leave town and which of them are loaded with expensive goods.

13. The Foundation Stone (Tavern)

The center of social life in the Gate Ward, the Foundation Stone is described in detail on page 21.

14. Tenement

This stone building was once a barracks, but it has since been converted to a low-cost, long-term living space. Merchants who expect to spend time in town, or folks who want a cheap room to call home, can pay 2 gp per week for a cramped sleeping chamber. There are forty such rooms available in this two-story building, with each room basically a cell with a small bed.

Urgak the half-orc manages this place for the dwarves of Hammerfast. He lives in a small apartment in the tenement's basement and relies on a spiked club to keep the peace when drunken or rowdy tenants get out of hand. Urgak is employed by the Swiftriver Clan (Location 15). A secret chamber attached to his apartment serves as a hiding place for the halflings' stolen goods. A secret passage from that room opens beneath the East Bridge. There, the halflings dispatch their goods along the river and into the Nentir Vale.

15. Swiftriver Clan Home

This small, stone building is packed to the rafters with the nearly two dozen halflings of the Swiftriver Clan. Loud, boisterous, and lacking any sense of tact, the halflings are always on the lookout for a new mark to fleece or a quick way to accumulate gold coins.

Although the halflings of the Swiftriver Clan are Hammerfast's most notorious residents, in their hearts they are fierce patriots and protective of their adoptive home. For years, they wandered the Nentir Vale. Orcs, goblins, and worse thinned their numbers, until finally they found a community willing to accept them. The halflings work a number of menial jobs in town, serving as maids and butlers to some of the rich families in the Merchant Ward and as staff in the inns and taverns.

The halflings' primary business, however, is smuggling. Whether a merchant wants to avoid taxes or carries goods that might draw unwanted attention, the halflings can pilot a small boat along the Rushing River in the dead of night, offload the goods in the secret passage that runs from the East Bridge to the tenement, and deliver them as instructed.

Dara Swiftriver is the clan's matriarch. She spends her days cooking and looking after the youngest halflings. A shrewd bargainer and a keen judge of character, she is currently plagued by dark moods and a short temper. The Circle of Stone (page 28) has recently contracted her to transport several half-orcs into town. Doing some research, Dara has learned that the Circle plots to assassinate several important people. Any accusations she makes against the Circle's leader, Grond, place her in a bad position, since his prestige and power allow him to dismiss such talk without hard evidence. Worse, in going to the authorities she must reveal her clan's operation and risk banishment. She cannot bear to lose her people's new home, particularly since she was the one who made the deal that allowed the halflings to become residents of Hammerfast.

16. Swiftriver Manor

The Swiftriver Clan acquired a second property in Hammerfast. The younger, unattached members of the clan live here. They welcome halflings and gnomes in for drinks and gossip, but tend to rebuff other folk.

Tharn Swiftriver, a scout and explorer, resides here when he is in town. Nothing happens within five miles without Tharn's knowledge. A skilled tracker, he can guide adventurers through the mountains and knows the location of dungeons, ruins, and whatever other sites they need to uncover. Tharn knows the location of Carthain's camp (page 26), but he believes the cover story that Carthain's followers are prospectors.

17. Halfling Square

A small fountain of a leaping fish stands in the middle of this square. The elders of the Swiftriver Clan gather here to sip tankards of mead and exchange stories.

Hugo Swiftriver is the clan's historian. Second in age only to Dara, he is hard of hearing and liable to repeat himself. The appearance of being a decrepit old fool is, however, only an act. Hugo bears a particular hatred for the spider goblins (page 6), because the Swiftrivers lost several of their number in a goblin attack before finding refuge in Hammerfast. Bringing him evidence of slain goblins earns his trust, which can be useful considering his position in the clan.

18. Three Brothers' Shack

This rickety wooden building is home to three dwarf brothers: **Toren, Therd,** and **Gelmon Woodstone**. They were tinkers and woodworkers in their youth, and still perform odd jobs around town for spare coins.

In truth, the brothers are the most successful thieves in town. A secret door between their shack and the warehouse next door allows them access to almost any goods that come through town. They cover their tracks by stealing only in small amounts, pilfering a few items here and there to sell to the Swiftriver Clan.

19. East Gate

Traffic heading into and out of the Nentir Vale passes through this gate. **Tras**, a human warrior, commands the guards here. He dispatches a scribe to escort merchants and anyone else with taxable goods to the Revenue Hall (Location 2).

Most folk who have the option avoid the East Gate, since Tras has a well-deserved reputation as a bully. He hates dragonborn and questions them on their business in town, although he is careful to pick on only those who are obviously poor. He is a member of the Circle of Stone, mainly because Grond has offered him a series of hefty bribes. Of course, he doesn't dare to accuse the second-highest ranking priest of Moradin of treason. Exile or imprisonment is not enough to shake him from his allegiance to Grond.

As an agent of the Circle, Tras ensures that the conspiracy's agents and goods pass through the gate without difficulties. In the past, he has also planted contraband on those who might make trouble for the Circle, earning them prison sentences or exile.

The Trade Ward

The Trade Ward is the economic heart of Hammerfast. Merchants gather here to buy and sell goods from across the Nentir Vale. Compared to the rowdy, chaotic Gate Ward, the Trade Ward is relatively quiet and sedate. By night, the streets are all but deserted as the traders head home, their goods safely locked away in warehouses. A number of shops and a few high-end inns dominate the neighborhood.

20. Trade Gate

Similar in construction to the West Gate in the Gate Ward, this gate is manned at all hours by eight guards. The elf **Tharra Silverleaf** commands the guards here. Because she requires little sleep, Tharra is liable to be on duty at almost any time of the day or night.

An elf in the ranks of Hammerfast's town guard draws much attention, and Tharra has learned to reply to it with a caustic, bitter sense of humor. Once an adventurer, she was cursed by a hag to have a crippling fear of the deep forests. Thus, Hammerfast has become her new home. Tharra longs to return to the wilderness, but even the trees that line the boulevard north of the gate make her uneasy. She is friendly toward other elves and eladrin, and might confide to a friend that her curse can be broken if someone slays the hag responsible for it. That creature wanders the Harken Forest (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 206). Tharra's position and popularity with the town guard make her a powerful ally.

21. Barracks

A second guard barracks stands here. Unlike the one at Location 8, this barracks is half empty, since it was built to accommodate the overflow of warriors from the first barracks as Hammerfast grew. The Circle of Stone has managed to assign all the guards sympathetic to its cause to this place. A secret chamber in the basement serves as the Circle's meeting place.

The barracks is two stories tall, with the first floor featuring a kitchen, a mess hall, and quarters, and the second floor consisting of several large dormitories for rank-and-file soldiers and private residences for officers. The basement has an armory and storage chambers, in addition to the Circle's meeting place. Supposedly, the basement is heavily trapped to prevent the theft of the weapons and goods stored there for use in emergencies. The Circle uses that story as a cover to deter the curious, although several deadly traps do, in fact, guard the secret chamber.

22. Trade Boulevard

A number of trees line the street here. When the orcs attempted to fell them with their axes, their weapons rebounded from the trees and scored fatal injuries on the would-be defilers. According to legend, the trees along the trade boulevard will wither and die only on the eve of Hammerfast's destruction.

The dwarf **Telg**, a ghost, tends to the trees. He appears at midnight and walks from tree to tree, speaking to them as though they were old friends. Most folk assume that Telg fades away during the day, but in truth he simply goes about invisibly under the sun. Thus, he overhears many conversations while he walks among the trees. Telg can conjure a small rain cloud to appear above the trees, and during long, hot, dry spells, a solitary gray cloud hovers over the Trade Boulevard.

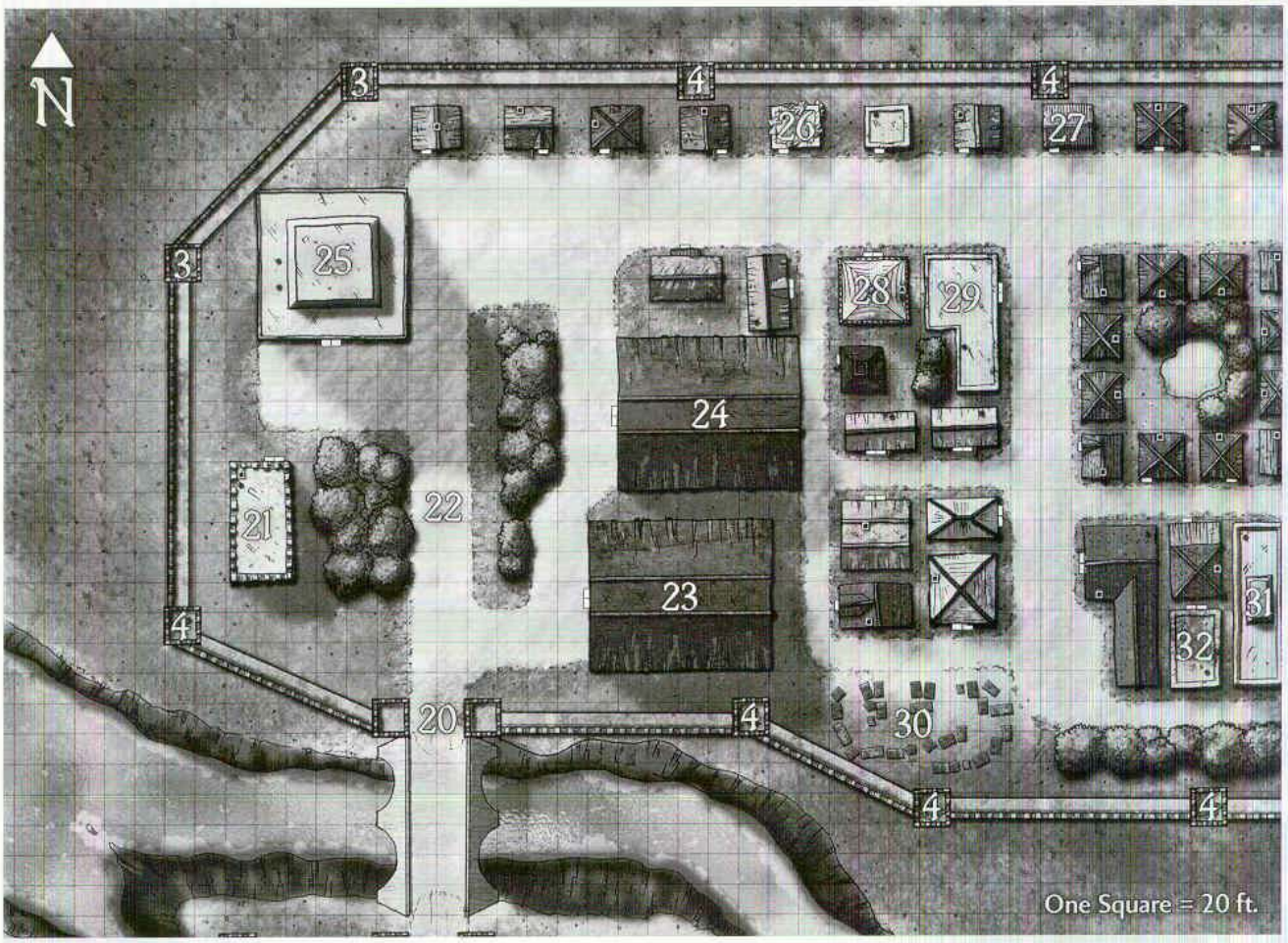
Kralick, an orc who died trying to cut down the trees, is Telg's nemesis. The orc appears each night and attempts to hew the trees with a ghostly axe. Telg succeeds in driving him off each time. The orc has sworn to either fell a tree or find and shatter his axe in revenge for its betrayal. A cackling, half-mad fiend, he taunts and howls at travelers each night.

Telg is a kindly old dwarf who speaks to living creatures in a gentle, grandfatherly tone. Although he loves the trees, he is terrified that Kralick might cut one down. He longs for a night off from his duties to search the town for the orc's axe, and adventurers that offer to guard the trees in his place (a tricky task, since living creatures are forbidden to attack the undead unless a ghost attacks first; Kralick is clever enough to attack only the trees) or to find the axe will earn his gratitude. Because Telg sees everyone who passes through the Trade Boulevard, he makes an excellent informant for those to whom he owes a favor. Kralick's axe is buried near the Iron Tomb (Location 27), and the guards there are unlikely to allow adventurers to excavate freely.

23. South Warehouse

This massive warehouse was built upon the ruins of several tombs, and as such it is regarded as a place of ill omen. Rumors abound of caravans bearing goods stored here meeting with gruesome ends. Careful research of the Trade Guild's records reveals that caravans bearing valuable goods once stored here do seem to disappear or come under attack more often than not. This reputation causes the guild to store goods belonging to outsiders or low-ranking guild members here. No one with any clout or impressive wealth and who is aware of the rumors allows their goods to be stored here.

In truth, representatives of the Circle of Stone have bribed the clerk, a human named **Frenis Tallgood**, whose job it is to log goods that enter this warehouse. Frenis passes reports along to Tarras at Rondal's Inn. Frenis is greedy but cowardly. If confronted, he readily betrays Tarras, but knows nothing else of Carthain's plans, the location of his camp, or other details of the bandit's activities.



24. North Warehouse

The personal storage space for high-ranking guild members and favored outsiders, the north warehouse resembles a small fortress. Built of stone and patrolled day and night by shifts of six mercenary warriors, gaining access to this place is no easy feat. Once inside, a pack of five iron defenders provides an additional surprise for intruders. Those with the means and the connections make sure to secure storage space in this facility and not in the warehouse to the south.

25. Trade Spire

This majestic stone structure is the financial, social, and political heart of Hammerfast. The first floor of the Trade Spire features a large, open trade market. Guild members conduct business here with representatives of every other settlement, mercantile organization, and noble family in the Nentir Vale. Entire fortunes have been made and lost on its floor in the space of hours, as one trader finds a market hungry for goods and another finds one that wouldn't take his offerings for free.

The second and third floors hold offices for all the major guilds that operate under the greater umbrella of the Trade Guild. Here, traders negotiate prices for the town's goods, meet with crafters to discuss terms of pending sales or to plan production for the coming year, and broker meetings between Hammerfast's artisans and buyers from outside town. The more prestigious guilds have large suites of offices on the third floor, and the second floor is given over to the less glamorous trades.

The fourth floor holds the guild's private meeting halls and offices. Here, the guild's elite members chart Hammerfast's economic course.

The fifth floor serves as the exclusive domain of Marsinda Goldspinner, her personal assistants, and her staff of handpicked advisers.

A squad of five guards keeps an eye on the Trade Spire's entrance. No one is allowed access to this place unless they are accompanied by a guild member who will vouch for their good conduct.

Grolin Surespike, a dwarf ghost who died in the Trade Spire back when it served as living quarters for Hammerfast's priests, appears elderly and frail. He is a rabidly conservative ghost who gladly voices opinions on the inferiority of nondwarves and the goods they produce. A staunch believer in dwarven superiority, he serves as a spy during trade negotiations. If anyone were to discover his role, they would possess useful information to use as blackmail against the guild.

26. The Ice Tomb

This plain, stone tomb looks much like the rest of the stone structures on this block, except for the thin layer of ice that covers its outer surface all year long. The air around the Ice Tomb ranges from bitterly cold in the winter to pleasantly cool during the height of summer. The folk of the Trade Ward gather around it during the hottest days, and when the heat is at its worst the town guards take up posts to reduce the inevitable pushing and shoving.

This tomb appears undisturbed, but unknown to the folk of Hammerfast, the priest **Erdella Sunhammer** is trapped within. Erdella was a high priest of Moradin when the Bloodspears overran Hammerfast. The orcs captured her, and a warlock among them sealed her in a magical block of ice within this tomb. The orcs are long dead, but Erdella still slumbers within.

27. The Iron Tomb

When the orcs stormed Hammerfast, they rushed over the tombs like locusts. Most of the tombs had a few traps that succeeded in killing a few orcs each. The Iron Tomb was different. One of the few tombs decorated with distinguishing marks, the Iron Tomb houses the remains of paladins of Moradin.

The undead paladins of Moradin still rest undisturbed within the Iron Tomb, as they slaughtered the few orcs foolish enough to trouble their sleep. When the dwarves returned to Hammerfast, the twenty paladins buried here appeared before the settlers. Their leader, Lord Gathrak, swore that he and the other paladins would arise from their graves on two conditions: If their tomb was disturbed or if Hammerfast faced invasion, they would arise to wreak vengeance upon the enemies of the town.

Since then, the town guard has maintained a constant watch over the entrance to this tomb. Rumors abound that a powerful artifact of Moradin is hidden within the tomb, but if anyone has entered the tomb to find it, they have not emerged to speak of it.

28. The Coach and Pony (Inn)

This small inn offers the finest accommodations in Hammerfast for visiting merchants and travelers, as well as adventurers who win the Goldspinner clan's favor. Its owner, the dwarf **Varda Goldspinner**, is Marsinda's youngest sister. She used her family's wealth and connections to establish her business, but since then her naturally buoyant, engaging personality has helped ensure her success.

The inn earned its name from Varda's tradition of keeping two small, comfortable coaches and a team of ponies for each. Guests of the Coach and Pony need never walk anywhere in town, since Varda's coaches and drivers are always available to ferry them around.

Kavik Torlin, a half-orc, drives one of the coaches. A bit dimwitted, he keeps careful notes on where he takes each passenger each day. The notes are handy reminders for him, but the bandit Carthain's spy in town, Tarras (see Location 12), pays one of the inn's maids to steal the discarded list each day. Many of Kavik's passengers end up as victims of Carthain's gang as Carthain learns of business transactions in town by studying who visits whom. The bandit lord plans to use innocent Kavik as a scapegoat if ever the need arises.

29. The Stores

This building is one of several in Hammerfast set aside to store supplies in the event of an attack, dangerous weather, or other emergency. It extends eight levels below the street and is crammed with grain, weapons, water, and other goods that can see the town through any emergency. Given Hammerfast's sometimes precarious food supply—as a place of the dead, Hammerfast wasn't located in an area with abundant farmland—the stores are heavily guarded at all times. Anyone caught snooping around here can expect a long, thorough interrogation at the hands of the town guard.

30. The Fish Market

To supplement the relatively limited diet available in Hammerfast, a number of folk have taken to fishing on the Rushing River. They climb the towers near here,

JIM NELSON

descend by wooden ladders to outside the wall, and spend hours under the hot sun in hopes of snagging one of the many fish that fill the river.

The Fish Market's prices are triple the normal rates for fish in other towns, with a single fish costing 6 sp. It is a sign of prosperity and wealth to serve fresh fish in town, and the folk of the market find more than enough customers despite their high rates.

Now and again, the fishermen snag an interesting item in their nets and on their hooks. In the past, they have found small sacks of coins, a glittering helm, and a skull crafted from silver. These items are the remains of a small skiff that belonged to a band of smugglers. The skiff was smashed on the rocks upstream. Its wreckage is tangled in the brush, but now and again part of the cargo comes loose and tumbles downriver. The crew, now animated as ghouls, jealously guard their goods. A ghoul might venture downriver in search of a particularly prized lost bauble. The fishermen sometimes work after dusk, leaving them vulnerable to such attacks.

31. Trade Bank

This imposing structure is a long, low stone edifice covered with bas relief carvings of dwarf warriors standing at attention. The doors are cast in iron, with several prominent locks running up and down them. The Trade Bank is perhaps the most secure building in town, with six iron defenders roaming its halls at night and a troop of guards assigned to watch it.

Almost every merchant of importance stores his or her most precious goods, family heirlooms, and other valuables here. This tomb became a bank because it features four levels of small, individual tombs beneath it. The bank's owner, **Ranklo Goldspinner**, placed iron doors with complex locks (DC 24 Thievery checks to unlock) on each one. Thus, the folk of Hammerfast are confident that their treasures are safe here.

Ranklo rents an individual vault for 5 gp per week, or space in a shared vault for 1 gp per week. If a customer goes one year without paying this rate, Ranklo seizes any items still in storage. That policy alone has helped him amass quite a fortune, since several adventurers that left treasure troves with him subsequently disappeared or never returned.

In addition to his vaults, Ranklo loans money at a 10 percent interest rate. He offers up to 5,000 gp on a loan, with up to two years to pay back the funds. In addition, Ranklo buys and sells magic items. The cost of the pieces in his collection depends on the vagaries of what folk are willing to offer him, but he sees magic items as a sound, useful investment.

The Deep Burrow Gang consists of kobolds loyal to Ranklo. Although the bank helped make Ranklo one of the richest people in town, his endless greed pushes him ever onward. Recently, he brought in a team of kobolds to dig out new vaults beneath the bank. Most folk in town find the kobolds detestable, but Ranklo's influence and his pledge to keep them locked away in the bank won him the Council's approval. He claims that the kobolds can dig small, narrow tunnels as a further security measure. Taller folk would simply be unable to reach the goods he stores in these vaults.

In truth, the kobolds are busy digging tunnels to the intact tombs in town. Ranklo plans to loot those tombs in secret, sharing some of the treasure with the kobolds but keeping the rest for himself. Of course, once the kobolds are no longer useful, he plans on staging an escape attempt that results in their deaths.

Ranklo is smooth, charismatic, and talkative, but this exterior hides a cold-blooded, calculating schemer. He wishes to become the richest person in the Nentir Vale, and dreams of leveraging his wealth to allow him to unseat his sister Marsinda from power. Already, he has offered favorable loans in secret to some of Marsinda's staunchest rivals. Most see this as an attempt to mend political differences to the family's advantage, but Ranklo is interested only in keeping as many of his sister's enemies in his back pocket as possible.

32. The Hidden Coin

This gambling hall hosts some of the most important and wealthiest folk in Hammerfast. The sturdy dwarves who watch the front door expect a 50 gp entry fee, and visitors in turn receive 50 gp worth of gambling chips. The high buy-in required for entry keeps all but the most serious gamblers away.

Due to an error in this place's construction, the front entrance to the tomb was placed on the north wall, rather than facing south toward the street. Many folk of Hammerfast do not even know of the Hidden Coin, since they lack the funds to even consider a visit to the place.

Tables for dice and card games, along with other games of chance, fill the place. A small bar provides liquid refreshment, and three private rooms in the back allow for invitation-only games of chance.

Delda Hammergold owns and operates the Hidden Coin. She is generous in offering credit to gamblers, because she finds it convenient to have powerful folk in her debt. She targets adventurers in particular, asking them to run errands on her behalf in exchange for canceling their debts. From Delda's point of view, an errand can include fetching a bottle of expensive wine from Fallcrest or forcing a deadbeat to pay off a loan.

The Lore Ward

History walks the streets of Hammerfast, so its study is vital to the town's continued success. The Lore Guild's first members were the sages who struck the covenant with the gods that allows the dwarves to live in Hammerfast. This history reminds residents of their debt to the guild and to the gods. The guild's ongoing work produces the knowledge that allows the living residents

of Hammerfast to coexist with its ghosts. Students from as far away as Winterhaven come to study with the scholars of the guild, bringing both prestige and income to the town.

33. The House of Memory

The dwarf ghost **Farras Stonescript** dwells here. By day, this half-ruined tower is filled with dust and debris. By night, though, it glows with spectral energy. Phantom tables and chairs, along with row after row of filled bookshelves, appear inside the tower. Farras died in the orc siege, but he lingers on, fulfilling his charge to keep records on where each dwarf who died during the siege was buried. To prevent tomb robberies, he writes his notes in a code that only he can decipher.

Farras is an unmatched expert on the region's history, and he can be persuaded to help those seeking to defend the town from evil, but his true task is to catalog the whereabouts and name of every dwarf ghost inhabiting Hammerfast. He sometimes hires adventurers to engage in detective work, offering knowledge in return for their attempt to interview a dangerous, perhaps half-mad, dwarf ghost.

34. The Black Crypt

Of all the tombs that remain undisturbed, the Black Crypt is perhaps the most foreboding. A black, stone edifice without any obvious doorways or other entrances, the crypt has a reputation for ill fortune. Residents avoid the streets around it, leaving the crypt in a strangely empty section of town even at the busiest times of day. More than one first-time visitor to Hammerfast has had a panicked, superstitious dwarf grasp his sleeve and drag him back from the crypt.

The truth behind the rumors about Black Crypt is both more sinister and more tragic than the folk of Hammerfast suspect. A dwarf lich named **Barrthak** dwells within the tomb. Interred here long ago as punishment for seeking unlife, the lich is trapped by a series of wards that the orcs could not break. Still, each day the wards grow weaker and weaker. Some day, Barrthak might emerge to menace Hammerfast and the surrounding area.

35. The Grand Library

The largest collection of books in the Nentir Vale serves as a powerful magnet for sages, adventurers, and anyone else interested in ancient lore. However, the ghost librarian Cherndon the Mad plays havoc with any attempt to sort the library's tomes. The sages of the Lore Guild make an effort to catalog and organize the books, but rumors persist of tomes that remain untouched since Hammerfast's fall, undiscovered among the library's sprawling shelves.

The library is a single story above ground, with two basement levels. Its top level contains a few chambers of books and many scriptoriums and small chambers in which experts conduct classes and visiting scholars copy or study works. The basement levels hold row after row of thick, dusty tomes. Open flames are forbidden in this place, and anyone entering here must bring a sunrod or a magical means of illumination.

Head Librarian Alzar Scrollkeeper is a hot-tempered old dwarf with little patience for visitors. He must approve all visitors to the library's lower levels, and at times refuses entrance to half-orcs, barbaric-looking folk, or anyone else that strikes him as suspicious. He bears a homicidal grudge against Cherndon the Mad and desperately wishes to destroy the ghost. Of course, Hammerfast's laws prevent that.

Cherndon the Mad appears seemingly at random to spread chaos throughout the library. He died trying to prevent the orcs from learning where several rich dwarf lords where buried. In death, he continues his task by scattering books and foiling attempts at research. He keeps several valuable tomes hidden in a secret chamber beneath the library, including several ritual books.

36. Lore Spire

The Lore Spire is a great center of learning in town, a place where folk from across the Nentir Vale assemble to study history, philosophy, mathematics, and other subjects. Students are required to donate to the Lore Guild's coffers in return for access to its libraries and tutors.

The Lore Spire is a five-level tower dominated by a great library of ancient dwarven lore. The first and second floors are filled with classrooms, lecture halls, and common rooms for study and discussion.

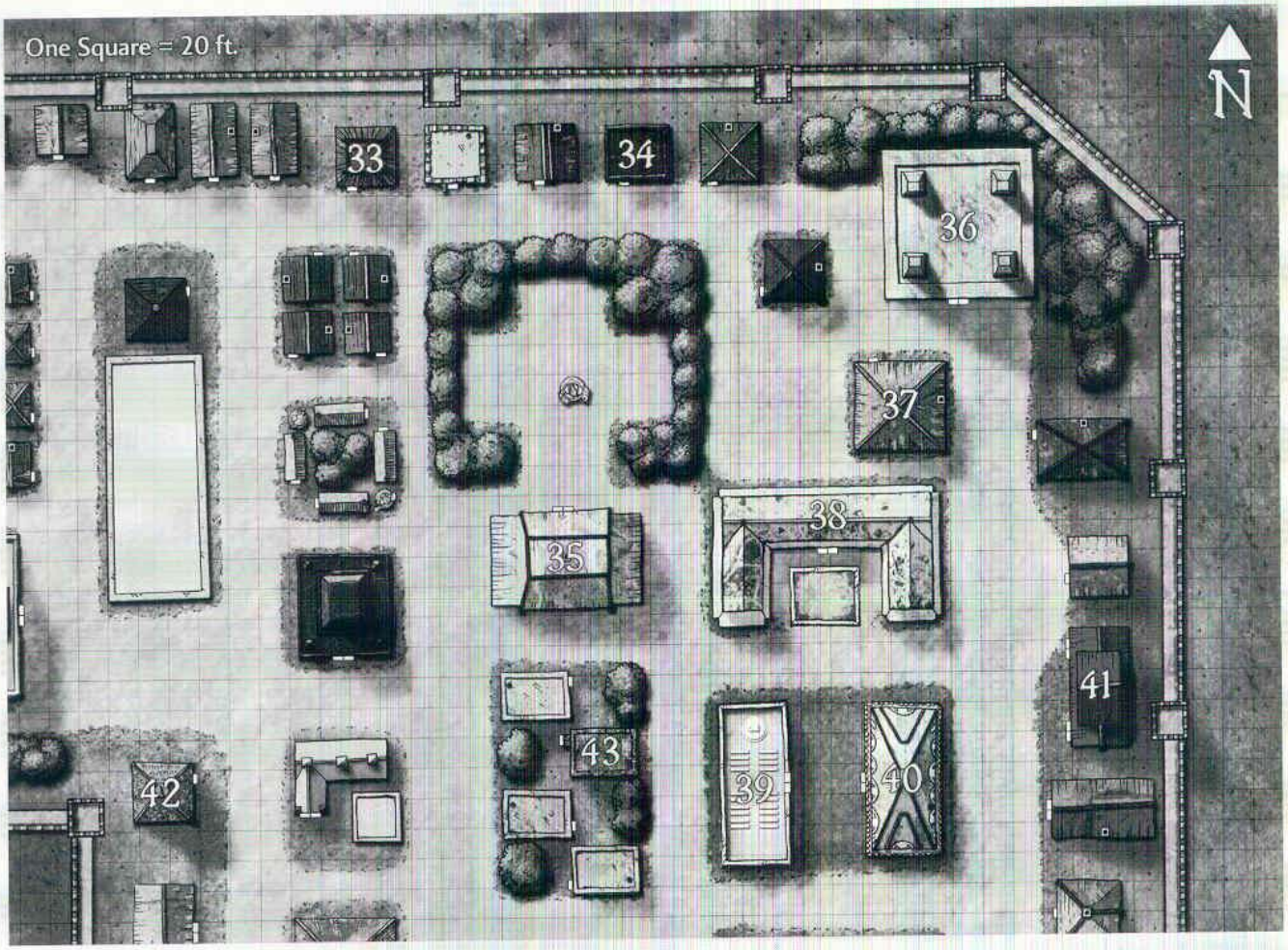
The third and fourth floors house the guild's private library. Only guild members are allowed access to this library. Although the Grand Library is open to any citizen of Hammerfast and to outsiders who receive permission from the librarians, the Lore Spire's collection is closely guarded. Rumors persist of dark tomes of blasphemous knowledge kept here.

The top floor contains private council chambers and workshops for the guild's leaders.

37. The Black Cat

A tavern popular with members of the Lore Guild, the Black Cat has a reputation for attracting odd folk. Sages and researchers with a bent for the macabre gather here to argue over their pet theories about magic, the nature of the gods, and other hot topics.

The Black Cat's owner, **Morgath Gravesend**, has made no effort to disguise the Black Cat's original purpose. Stone sarcophagi serve as tables, and the original decorations remain intact. The Black Cat is popular with adventurers who wish to steer clear of Hammerfast's common folk. Tieflings, half-orcs, genasi, and other outcasts have made the Black Cat their chosen



watering hole. Stepping into this place is like entering a menagerie of humanoids from across the planes.

Morgath is the tavern's pale-skinned, gaunt, human owner. His black, formal coat and pants give him the look of a mortician, and his mordant sense of humor suits the proprietor of a tavern that looks like a burial tomb.

38. Temple of Moradin

The temple of Moradin is an elaborate, marble structure. Within it are many workshops dedicated to Moradin in which priests toil over elaborate projects in his honor. The priests of Moradin keep the Forge of Life, a sacred workshop located at the center of the temple, constantly in use. Day and night, they craft metal objects and keep the forge burning. If the fires of the forge ever go out, or if a minute passes without the clank of hammer hitting metal, the priests would be required to spend months reconsecrating the temple.

The most noteworthy feature of the temple is the great pool of fire that burns before it. This fire flows like water stirred by a gentle current. Although a torch or a candle thrust into it leaps into flame, the fire poses no danger to living creatures. Dwarves believe that any home fire or forge lit with such a flame brings Moradin's blessing to all it shines upon. Dwarf adventurers in particular seek to light a torch here before beginning an underworld expedition, carefully transferring the flame from a sputtering torch to a fresh one to preserve Moradin's favor throughout the adventure.

39. Temple of Pelor

The temple of Pelor in Hammerfast is a large, roofless structure. Even in the depths of winter, Pelor's might keeps the temple's interior pleasantly warm and bright. Within the temple grow gardens of flowers and fresh fruit, a sign of Pelor's abundant favor. The priests regard the garden's progress as an omen of the coming year. A stunted garden means tough times; a verdant one is a sign of prosperity.

Sunspeaker Deldaran is an eladrin devotee of Pelor. A wise and charitable soul, he makes it his personal mission to offer free meals to the destitute of Hammerfast. If anything unusual occurs in the town's tenements, he is the first to know of it.

40. Temple of Ioun

It is fitting that the god of knowledge, skill, and prophecy maintains a temple in the Lore Ward. Given the number of scholars that travel here from across the Nentir Vale, there are nearly as many devotees of Ioun in Hammerfast as there are of Pelor.

The temple features a small library and a large meeting hall where Ioun's faithful meet to debate or to share academic discoveries. The high priest, a gnome named **Kendred**, is particularly fascinated by strange monsters and reports of dungeons and other dangerous places. He invites adventurers to the temple to share what they have seen in their travels and has been known to hound them for hours with questions. On the other hand, those who win his favor can expect to be able to purchase rituals, particularly Raise Dead, at a 20 percent discount. Kendred has been known to raise some folk for free if they can offer a particularly fascinating account of their demise. For instance, he desperately wants to question someone on what it is like to be swallowed by a purple worm to settle a bet on the beast's internal anatomy and workings.

41. Oakhall Theater

The Oakhall Theater is a wooden building with a facade painted with a garish swirl of color that the theater's owner, the tiefling **Xerrex**, claims is the work of the visionary eladrin artist Veldyra. Privately, Xerrex loves the painting because it makes his theater a distinctive landmark among the drab stone buildings of Hammerfast. Famous for such publicity stunts as arranging a mock raid on Hammerfast by actors dressed as barbarians (which collapsed almost immediately under a hail of crossbow fire from the town guard), Xerrex is a showman, an entrepreneur, and a rabid patron of the arts. He sees the dwarves as dour, too serious, and desperately in need of some culture.

Xerrex prefers elaborate productions, such as one featuring full-size papier-mâché giants in the *Axe of the Dwarvish Lords*, or another with a flaming efreet puppet as the centerpiece of a retelling of the life of the archmage Tzunk. He pays a premium for freshly killed monsters, which he and his artists use as the basis of new special effects or stuff as props. For a detour into comedy or the ridiculous, Xerrex provides the perfect option. He's flamboyant, over the top, and ambitious far beyond his abilities.

Xerrex has decided to feature prominent residents of Hammerfast in his most recent plays. Because he dares not offend anyone who has political power, adventurers are the perfect targets of his attention. Xerrex might demand to accompany them on an adventure in order to discover how they work in the field. If rebuffed, he isn't above sneaking after the adventurers and observing them from afar. After all, Xerrex believes that any hardship is worth enduring for his art.

42. Idara's Tower

Idara is one of the foremost users of magic in Hammerfast. A druid by trade, she is a half-elf who has found a safe haven in the dwarven town. Idara spends much of her time in the wilds surrounding the town, but as she has aged, she has come to appreciate the safety and comfort of dwelling within the town's walls.

Little happens outside the walls near town without Idara's knowledge. Birds and bats flock to her tower to bring her tidings, circling her tower day and night.

Although Idara lives in Hammerfast, she has never been fully accepted by its leaders. They at first believed that the birds would bring reports on bandits and other monsters. Although they sometimes provide useful information, Idara will not use these creatures as a spy network. They are her friends, and asking them to run errands for her takes away from time they must spend gathering food and readying for the turn of the seasons.

Thus, many folk in Hammerfast view Idara with some suspicion, as if she holds back some of the assistance she could offer. Despite this view, Idara genuinely wants to help Hammerfast. As something of an outsider, she is likely to adopt newcomers (such as adventurers) as allies and confidants. If her creatures spot something suspicious, she is more likely to turn to her allies for help rather than to the town guard, which rarely takes action on her leads unless there is a clear threat to Hammerfast or to the caravans traveling to and from the town's walls.

43. Helka's House of Fortune

The old crone **Helka** lives here with her five sons, fishermen who spend most of their time at the Fish Market (Location 30). A withered, elderly human, Helka long ago lost her sight and speaks in the barest whisper. Despite her advanced age, she is one of the most influential people in town. Folk from all ranks of society come to her for advice.

Helka is a fortune-teller skilled at divination. In most cases, she delivers vague proclamations that her customers can easily interpret to match however things work out. For such readings, she charges a few silver pieces. Those with real money to spend receive the benefits of her true talents.

Helka can call upon the dead, drawing their spirits from across the planes to answer to up to three questions at a time. The dead need not answer truthfully, so most customers contact relatives, allies, and others they trust. Helka charges 100 gp for this service. She can perform this task once per day, although at her age she rarely attempts it more than once per week.

Helka appears harmless, but she was not always a fortune-teller. In truth, she is an outcast shadar-kai, and her sons are cleverly constructed homunculi that obey her commands. She stole her talent from the Raven Queen and lives in fear of the god's vengeance.

The Craft Ward

The Craft Ward is a mixture of hard work and youthful exuberance, centered around the Craft Spire and the many workshops that surround it. The crafters that live and do business in Hammerfast are based here. In the same way that the Lore Ward serves as a center for scholars, the Craft Ward is home to many experts in weaving, smithing, and other crafts.

44. The Guildhall

The Craft Guild encompasses a broad variety of professions, including weaving, metalsmithing, and gem-cutting. The Guildhall was built to foster cooperation and unity among such disparate artisans. The guild holds weekly meetings in this large hall.

Auran Deepmine maintains an office in the Guildhall, and he is perhaps the most important person in town for adventurers with mercenary inclinations. He handles requests from Craft Guild members for strange materials and rare ingredients. The artisans' requests range from the mundane to the bizarre, since many of them use rituals and magical incantations to produce wondrous goods. Currently, Auran needs feathers from a cockatrice, hair cut from a living centaur, and a goblin capable of playing the fiddle. Auran hires adventurers to recover such items, usually paying from 25 gp to 100 gp (use a treasure parcel appropriate for the party's level).

45. Apprentice Square

This large pavilion consists of a wooden roof supported by four massive stone columns. The apprentices of the Craft Guild gather here to practice their trades between periods of instruction. Master artisans visit the pavilion to inspect the apprentices' work and to find students with untapped potential.

Adventurers come here in search of deals on crafted goods. Anyone with *residuum* and a desire to convert it into a magic item can find the right person for the job here. Adventurers can buy items here at a 5 percent discount, but there is a chance that the end result will be garish or ugly.

46. Guild Warehouse

This large wooden structure holds the various reagents, ingredients, and other rare goods that the guild gathers for its members. The items fetch quite a price on the open market, so the warehouse is heavily guarded.

Eldrin Palwyn is a human mercenary hired to guard the warehouse. He leads a troop of six guards that keep watch over the place day and night. Eldrin is in contact with the Swiftriver Clan (page 11), and uses them to smuggle expensive, highly taxed reagents into town. If the adventurers have a run-in with the halflings, they might inadvertently expose this tax evasion scheme and ignite a major scandal in Hammerfast.

47. Craft Spire

The five stories of the Craft Spire are where the masters of the major arts hold court. Although these masters are usually skilled crafters, they are by no means the best. Rather, they are adept politicians who combine a knowledge of their chosen specialties with a talent for melding the often fractious artisans of the guild into a single, coherent group.

Where the Guildhall (Location 44) is the social center for the town's artisans, the Craft Spire is the guild's political center. Each master occupies a series of small chambers where he or she meets with representatives from the other guilds and members representing other specialties within the Craft Guild. The fifth floor features a single, large chamber for debate.

The Craft Guild is easily the most divided of the guilds. The artisans who make up the guild struggle among themselves to set prices, cut deals with the Trade Guild, and consult with the Lore Guild on research into new methods of production. The debate that takes place on the fifth floor of the Craft Spire might concern subjects as varied as the metalworkers' desire to increase prices or the brewmasters' request for more funds to research new ales.

48. Guild Dormitory

The guild dorms are home to students sent to Hammerfast to learn from master artisans. The dorms also provide housing for any artisan who needs a place to stay. An artisan can live here for one month free of charge. After that, the guild rents rooms for 5 gp per month.

The Streets of Hammerfast

Hammerfast is a busy place, as merchants and travelers from the Nentir Vale and beyond congregate here. In the early spring after the snows melt and in the fall after the harvest, the streets are choked with caravan wagons, pack mules, and travelers. A band of a hundred mercenary warriors en route to a paymaster might clog the streets one day, and a winding caravan of priceless treasures from the unknown east could bring traffic to a halt the next.

Although it's easy to focus on the action that takes place within the buildings and notable locations of Hammerfast, don't overlook the potential for the urban equivalent of a random encounter. Adventurers might bump into an old friend who bears dire news, a clumsy adventurer might accidentally knock over a crate of porcelain goods precariously balanced atop a cart, or a cleric of Bahamut might find a crippled old adventurer begging for help.

Small scenes that occur on the streets help bring Hammerfast to life. If your group has an actor, an explorer, or a storyteller, these scenes give you the chance to demonstrate daily life in town. Even if the scenes have little or no tie to the current adventure or to the adventurers' primary goals, they add texture and flavor to any game session.

49. Craft Way

This street is the center of the Craft Guild's daily operations. Shops and workshops line this street along both sides, offering a bewildering variety of wares. If adventurers need to buy something, they can find it here.

The shops are located along both sides of Craft Way and on one side of the next street east. Each building includes a workshop and living quarters for the owner and any apprentices.

50. The Black Spire

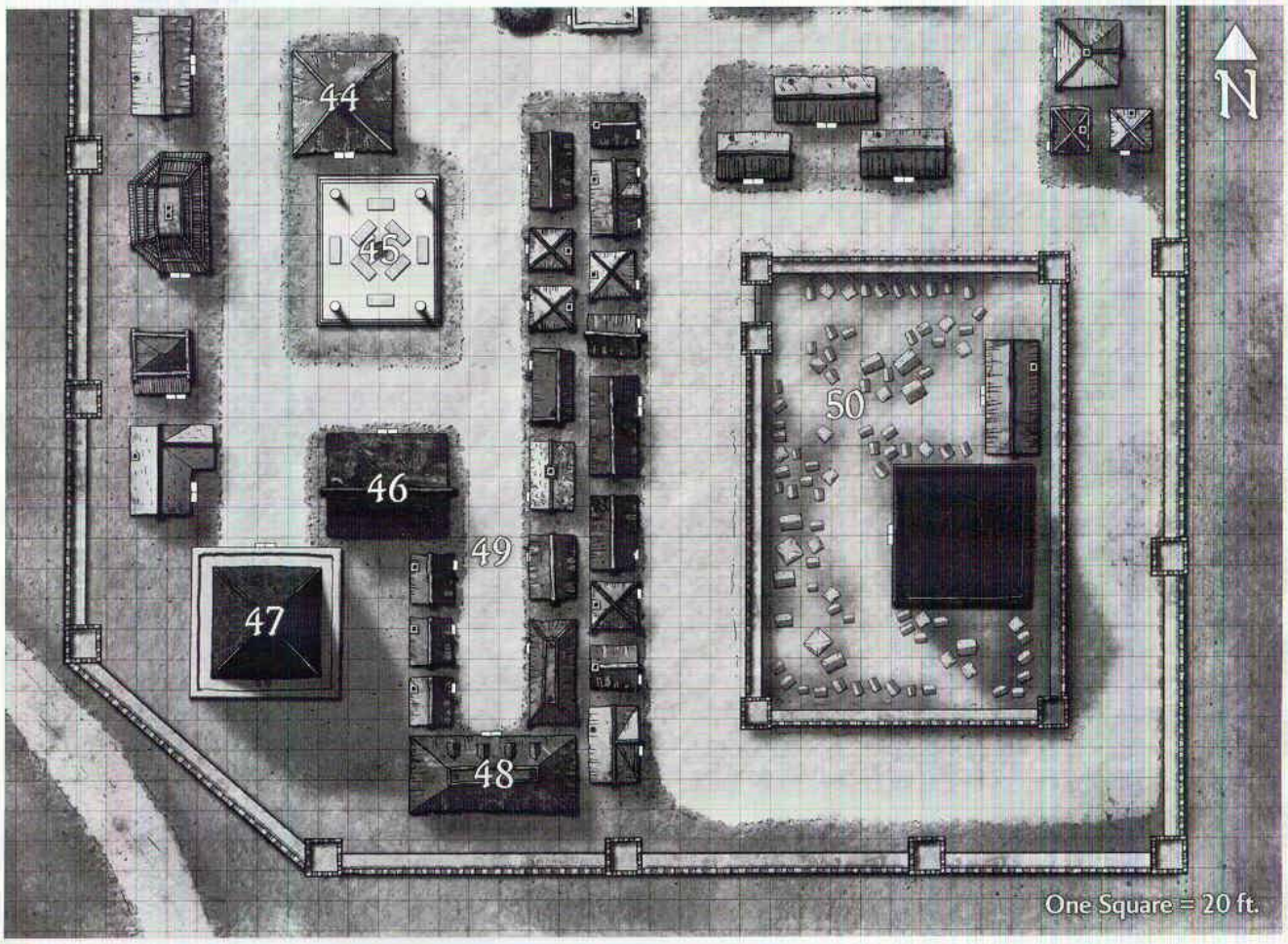
The Black Spire, like the guild spires, rises five stories above the rest of Hammerfast. As part of the compact that established the town, this spire serves as a temple of Gruumsh. The spire itself is hollow, with rings of balconies along the inner walls. Priests of Gruumsh and his champions engage in ritual combat inside.

A number of tents for pilgrims and other visitors surround the spire, and a wooden outbuilding houses the temple's priests. The walls surrounding the spire are 10 feet tall. The folks of Hammerfast joke that nobody knows if the walls are there to keep the worshipers of Moradin out or the devotees of Gruumsh in. In either case, the walls go a long way to keeping intact the compact upon which Hammerfast is founded.

Baldreg Skullbreaker, the high priest of Gruumsh, is a tough old half-orc. He's both a fanatic worshiper of Gruumsh and a thorough realist. He understands that the compact prevents him from taking direct action against the dwarves of Hammerfast, but he delights in the mixture of fear and disgust that his temple causes in the town's citizens.

Baldreg also knows that there is an important reason why Gruumsh demanded a presence in Hammerfast. A great dwarf champion of Gruumsh, Jaltar Hammerfist, was among the orcs who stormed this place. Jaltar's great martial prowess—he slew thirty orcs to earn a place in their horde—was due in part to his possession of the *Spear of the Sundered Eye*, an artifact of Gruumsh that has since been lost. Baldreg's divinations show that the spear is hidden somewhere in town. Jaltar died attempting to storm the Iron Tomb, slain by the ghostly paladins that still dwell there. The paladins seized the spear and locked it deep within their tomb. It rests there alongside the staff *wyrmspike*.

Baldreg has had visions that a new champion of Gruumsh will arise, claim the spear, and lead the faithful on a glorious conquest. Baldreg is eager to reclaim the spear, but cannot afford to draw suspicion upon the temple. He works through intermediaries to find adventurers or thieves willing to break Hammerfast's laws and enter the Iron Tomb.



THE FOUNDATION STONE

The most popular tavern in Hammerfast for adventurers and other ne'er-do-wells, the Foundation Stone plays host to mercenaries, explorers, and roughnecks. Anyone who needs to hire adventurers for a job heads to the Foundation Stone. (A map of the interior of the Foundation Stone can be found on the reverse side of the poster map.)

DESCRIPTION

The Stone, as it is commonly referred to, is a large stone building that once served as a meeting hall for Hammerfast's guards. With the rise of the town as a trade center, Hammerfast had a growing need for entertainment to distract visitors. Mercenaries hired to guard caravans had a disturbing tendency to drink themselves stupid and pick fights with one another and with town residents. To most folk of Hammerfast, the Foundation Stone is a holding pen for the undesirable elements necessary to grease the wheels of commerce.

The tavern is built from dull, brown bricks. Its first floor is a wide, open, common room filled with tables. The second floor consists of a balcony overlooking the main bar, more tables, and a few private rooms for relatively quiet discussions.

The Stone's reputation for rowdiness is well earned. Knife-throwing contests, wrestling matches, and other competitions that become more interesting with buckets of cheap ale keep its customers busy until dawn.

Bar: The long bar seems to be crafted from a single, massive piece of stone. Most noteworthy is the graffiti that covers it. The owner encourages visitors to carve small maps of their travels into the bar. It is covered with a number of such drawings, ranging from the incomprehensible to the work of expert cartographers. Rumors persist that some of the maps lead to hidden treasure.

Tables and Chairs: These unremarkable tables and chairs are the preferred weapons of brawling guests. A table can be flipped over with a DC 16 Strength check that knocks prone one creature adjacent to it. The chairs, when used as weapons, deal 1d8 damage and shatter on a successful attack.

Balcony: The balcony overlooking the bar is 10 feet up and, like the rest of the Foundation Stone, is carved from rock.

Chandelier: A huge iron chandelier with everburning torches casts light into the main chamber. With a DC 16 Acrobatics check as a move action, a character can leap onto the chandelier from the balcony and then jump into any square on the first floor without provoking opportunity attacks. On a failed check, the character falls into the Pit (see below) and any brawlers spend their next turns pointing and laughing.

The Pit: The most notable feature of the Foundation Stone, the Pit emanates a stench that would gag a troll. It is 10 feet deep and filled with a foot of burbling, horrid-smelling water. Once a month, a mage is hired to scour the pit with fire. The stench clears for a day or so before the Foundation Stone's patrons reestablish it by dumping trash, discarded food, and other waste into the hole. The Pit plays a central role in games of Giant's Feet, described below.

Target Dummies: Part of the first floor is set aside for target dummies used in games of knife throwing. See page 22 for more information on such contests.

Kegs: A keg is a heavy but potentially useful weapon during a brawl. A character needs a Strength of at least 16 to lift a keg, which can be used as a thrown weapon to make an area burst 1 attack with a range of 5 squares. This is a Strength attack against Reflex that deals 1d6 damage and knocks a target prone on a hit.

Kitchen: A small kitchen enables the Stone to serve a few simple meals, such as roasted chicken, freshly made bread, and thick slices of cheese.

Private Rooms: These rooms are set aside for folk who come to the Stone to do business. Each room features a lock (DC 16 Thievery check to unlock). The owner has a set of keys.

Stairs: Stairs lead down to a small cellar containing spare kegs of ale. A broad set of stairs leads up to the second floor. The stairs are difficult terrain.

FUN AND GAMES

Drink is not enough for the caravan guards and adventurers who frequent the Foundation Stone. To help pass the time until the next job, the Stone's patrons engage in various contests and games.

Giant's Feet: The most popular game in the Stone pits two (likely drunk) combatants against each other above the festering Pit. A wooden plank is laid across the Pit, and the two competitors have their hands tied behind their backs. They then face off upon the plank, starting at opposite ends.

The goal of the game is simple. The first one into the Pit loses. Of course, without hands the contest becomes a rather comical exchange of kicks, body checks, and foot stomps. With a few tankards of ale in each competitor, fights more often than not end with both combatants plummeting into the Pit.

If an adventurer is brave, foolish, or drunk enough to play Giant's Feet, run the game as follows. Each round, a competitor makes an opposed Strength check and an opposed Dexterity check. Regardless of success or failure, if either check result is less than 10, that combatant falls into the Pit and loses. A combatant who succeeds at both checks wins, and the foe plummets into the Pit. If both competitors succeed at the same number of checks, the fight is a draw and the competitors make another round of checks.

Giant's Feet is a popular game with the Stone's customers, and tournaments are a popular diversion. Spectators bet on matches, and an adventurer who wins a few games quickly develops a reputation that earns him or her challenges from roughnecks and invitations to tournaments.

Knife Throwing: Surprisingly, no one has ever been seriously injured by a thrown knife in the Stone. Competitors stand 10 feet from the target dummies and let fly. The knives are normal daggers, and the target dummies have AC 10. Each competitor takes a turn making a ranged basic attack against a target dummy. A miss is worth -5 points, and a natural 20 is worth 10 points. An attack result that hits with a total of 19 or lower is worth 2 points. An attack result of 20 or higher is worth 5 points. After 5 throws, the high score wins. In case of a tie, the competitors alternate attacks until the tie is broken.

As with Giant's Feet, the Stone hosts tournaments and other competitions. The Thrower's Cup is a small tin mug awarded at the grand tournament each winter. The winner is allowed free ale as long as it is poured into and drunk from the cup.

OTHER URBAN THREATS

Although many of the villains in an urban campaign are residents who have turned to evil, there are a number of monsters that are a perfect fit for campaigns set in Hammerfast.

Dark Ones: These murderous creatures of the Shadowfell have established a foothold in Hammerfast. They are urban predators, adept at robbing and killing townsfolk in the dead of night. The dark ones leave no witnesses, and if they remain unchecked, the town might devolve into hysteria over the killer that stalks the streets. The dark ones live in a previously undiscovered, underground crypt hidden in the Craft Ward.

Gargoyles: A small clutch of these creatures lurk on Hammerfast's rooftops. The gargoyles are content to prey upon birds and animals, since they understand that any attacks on the town's residents would bring about a determined hunt for them. Despite their limited intellect, gargoyles make good spies and watchers. A few shady individuals in town use gargolyes in their various schemes.

Satyrs: A small gang of satyrs come to town once a year at the height of summer. Long ago, the satyrs found an abandoned dragon's lair in the mountains. Each year, they gather treasure from the hoard and descend upon Hammerfast for a week of drinking and feasting. The satyrs are troublemakers, although they are not evil or malicious. Adventurers who befriend them might find them valuable allies, because the satyrs know many secrets of the Nentir Vale's wilderness. If the satyrs are mistreated or if any of their number is killed, the folk of Hammerfast could face an angry satyr lord and his army from the Feywild.

NOTABLE NPCs

As a rough-and-tumble place, the Stone has attracted more than its share of colorful characters.

Milo Longfathom is the owner of the Stone. This conniving, amoral halfling waters down the ale and whiskey, demands a cut of any bets placed in the tavern, and rifles the pockets of any unconscious drunk that his bouncers toss out the front door. Yet for all his flaws, he is beloved by the toughs and rowdies he serves, precisely because they respect someone half their size who is ready, willing, and able to brawl with anyone who crosses him.

The bartender **Graal** is a crude half-orc who has little patience for questions or newcomers. A being of few words, he prefers to express his displeasure by spitting in the beer of anyone who annoys him.

Two big, burly humans, **Krank and Gaff**, serve as Milo's bouncers. Twin brothers who gave up a life of petty crime for work at the Stone, the two are skilled pugilists who have never lost a fight. Despite their great strength, they are quite friendly to strangers. They love hearing stories of distant lands, and listen to such tales with childlike wonder.

Ilara is a stunning eladrin beauty who seems out of place in a dump like the Stone. As the most talented knife thrower in town, she endures the stench and the patrons' leers to fleece drunks of their cash. She puts on a giggling act and throws a few games before enticing her marks into games with higher stakes. Her attack bonus with a thrown dagger is +15.

The conniving warrior **Xert** is secretly an agent for the bandit Carthain. He tries to sign on with caravans as a guard in order to report on the caravans' defenses, troop quality, and cargo. If adventurers with a lot of cash show up in town, he tries to hire himself as a mercenary. He then assesses their wealth and reports to Carthain. The bandit might tangle with adventurers if the payoff is big enough.

The tall, mute goliath named **Kubosho** currently reigns as the Giant's Feet champion. He has a Strength modifier of +8 and a Dexterity modifier of +7. Once an unmatched mountain climber among his people, he accidentally triggered a rock slide that killed his two brothers. He drinks himself into a stupor each night and competes for money to pay for the night's ale. If the adventurers take him under their wing and sober him up, he proves to be a skilled guide in the mountains.

A tiefling bard, **Trell** has an unmatched store of bawdy stories, crude jokes, and raunchy limericks. He performs at the Stone several times a week, and he has a tendency to use a newcomer as the butt of his jokes and poems. The regulars at the Stone consider this a standard baptism by fire, and anyone who takes exception to Trell's jokes might touch off a brawl.

VILLAINS OF HAMMERFAST

No bastion of civilization is free of villains, and Hammerfast is no exception. This section presents three distinct villain groups, along with quests you can use to set adventurers against them. It also includes tips and suggestions for creating a campaign that runs from 1st to 10th level. You can use the entire campaign, incorporate some of the ideas into your own plans, or use it as background events that bring Hammerfast to life while the adventurers pursue their own agendas.

Background

There are three individuals who menace Hammerfast: the bandit Carthain, the rebellious priest Grond, and the champion of Gruumsh Thar.

Grond is a misguided fanatic who, under the sway of a succubus, seeks to destroy the town's temple of Gruumsh. Doing so invites divine retribution upon the town, but Grond has been tricked by the succubus **Pythrana** into believing he acts on Moradin's behalf.

Thar wants to awaken the dragon Calastryx to smash Hammerfast and destroy the Nentir Vale for the greater glory of Gruumsh as a way of redeeming the failure of the orcs. The dragon slumbers in Forgepeak, defeated years ago by the wizard Starris. Thar has used a number of rituals, along with infusions of hydra's blood, to heal Calastryx's wounds and bind him to Thar's command. Thar is acting without the knowledge of the priests of Gruumsh in Hammerfast. If they knew of his plans, the divine compact would force them to ally with the priests of Moradin against Thar.

Carthain stands in the middle of these two. His agents do much of the dirty work for Grond and Thar, both of whom want to remain hidden. Carthain's thugs raid caravans for materials and supplies that Thar needs, and work on Grond's behalf to ruin his enemies among the guilders.

Quests

This section presents a number of quests you can use to shape a Hammerfast arc. Each quest includes suggestions on how to use it in a larger campaign narrative.

If you decide to use this series of quests as part of a campaign to take your adventurers from 1st to 10th level, keep in mind that it takes around eight encounters for a group to gain a level. You can run other adventures while inserting the quest described here for each level, in order to maintain the Hammerfast plot arc. For some stretches of the campaign, the story might be the most important aspect of the game. In others, it could be a sideline to stories that focus on specific player characters or other parts of the campaign.

Caravan Duty (Level 2)

This quest is a great way to introduce adventurers to Hammerfast. The adventurers receive a commission from **Galwik Goldspinner**, Marsinda Goldspinner's son, to escort a wagon of trade goods to Hammerfast. They can meet Galwik anywhere in the Nentir Vale.

When the caravan enters the Dawnforge Mountains, it comes under attack from a gang of bandits led by **Serlek Undertow**, Carthain's lieutenant. A group of kenkus use their mimicry ability to lure the guards away from the caravan by ruses, such as posing as an injured traveler. Meanwhile, human bandits and halfling thieves sneak into the caravan to grab the jars of hydra's blood carried among the goods, while others attempt to kidnap Galwik.

Campaign Hooks: Galwik's caravan carries several jars of hydra blood, a key ingredient in healing potions as well as an important part of Thar's ritual to heal and awaken Calastryx. Galwik brags about the profit he'll make from the blood, and the bandits seem to know the blood is aboard the wagons. They specifically try to grab it before fleeing.

JIM NELSON

When the adventurers arrive in town, they have their first encounter with the Circle of Stone in the Gate Market (Location 5), where Grond is delivering a speech railing against nondwarves in town. The adventurers see that Grond has some support in town, but the town guard arrives in time to escort Grond away and prevent a riot. The adventurers should also hear stories of the bandits that plague Hammerfast and the terrible effect they've had on trade.

Meanwhile, the Goldspinners offer the adventurers lodging at the Coach and Pony, putting them under the eyes of Carthain's unwitting spy Kavik (page 14).

Minor Quest: If the adventurers prevent the theft, they earn 125 XP. Galwik and his family, impressed with their bravery, might contact them in the future with more work.

Thieves in the House (Level 3)

Old Gaff (page 9) hears of the adventurers' deeds and decides they would make a good target for his scam. Gaff is eager to lead them to the dungeon under the monastery, where the fire opal rests. He doesn't know that Serlek and a gang of bandits use the dungeon as a lair.

If the adventurers defeat the bandits they encounter here, they find several important clues. Serlek has a carrier pigeon with a small scroll case wired to its leg containing a letter that includes a detailed schedule of caravans and the goods they carry. All of the caravans had goods stored in the South Warehouse (Location 23). A partially burned note threatens Serlek with dire punishment for failing to steal the hydra blood from Galwik's caravan. The two notes display different handwriting. The list of caravan goods is from Frenis. The threatening letter is from Carthain, relaying Thar's anger.

Minor Quest: The adventurers receive 150 XP if they uncover the notes and hand them over to Marsinda or Galwik. They also receive a commission to uncover the bandits' spies in Hammerfast.

The Enemy Within (Level 4)

This part of the campaign is fairly free form. The adventurers must discover the spies in town, such as Tarras (page 10) and Frenis (page 12). The adventurers must use stealth, trickery, and good planning to track down the spies. During this part of the campaign, they have their first encounters with the Circle of Stone. As the adventurers conduct their investigation, dwarf thugs accost them.

Campaign Hooks: Grond steps up his rhetoric against the town's descent into impious commercialism after a caravan heading to Hammerfast is destroyed. Some of the wagons were burned, and the caravan guards were mercilessly slaughtered. The caravan carried several jars of hydra's blood.

Major Quest: The adventurers receive 175 XP for each spy they uncover and capture. At this point, Marsinda has enough evidence (obtained from Tarras or Frenis) to suspect that Grond is behind the caravan attacks. She wants the adventurers to find and detain Carthain in hopes that he can provide evidence against Grond.

Fall of the Bandit King (Level 5)

With information recovered from the spies, the adventurers take the fight to Carthain. The final battle in this story arc is a lightning raid on the bandit village. The place is rife with traps, since Carthain took pains to design it for maximum defense. He expects an all-out raid by the town guard, but a stealthy, precise strike by adventurers can take his followers by surprise and trap Carthain before he can escape.

Campaign Hooks: As the adventurers battle Carthain's gang, they find several dragonborn among his followers, sent by Thar to help Carthain on his mission. These dragonborn hide their allegiance at all costs. The adventurers encounter Thar on the way to Carthain's lair, as he returns from delivering his warriors to Carthain. The dragonborn stops and talks with the adventurers, secretly sizing up their abilities. He has no intention of fighting them at this point, and the adventurers have no reason to attack him. Only later, after sacking the bandit camp, could they begin to suspect the role Thar plays in the story. If they accuse Thar of attacking the caravan mentioned above, he merely laughs at them. What proof do they have? Do they propose arresting every dragonborn in the region? Even if the adventurers grab Thar, the folk of Hammerfast do not dare arrest a champion of Gruumsh without a clear, compelling reason.

Major Quest: If the adventurers capture Carthain, he is thrown into prison. The adventurers receive 200 XP each and are treated as heroes in town.

A Blade in the Night (Level 6)

Sensing that the adventurers are closing in on him, Grond steps up his rhetoric. He labels Carthain a follower of Gruumsh. The Circle has infiltrated the town guard and poisons Carthain in prison, planting a symbol of Gruumsh on his body. Marsinda asks the adventurers to uncover the conspiracy behind the Circle of Stone. The adventurers' assignment earns them a visit from Gerrek (page 29), who uses the Circle of Stone's thugs to ambush them. Gerrek's thugs engage in a running battle against the adventurers that ends with his confronting them.

Campaign Hooks: With Carthain's defeat, the adventurers encounter a few more dragonborn in town, including Thar. Without Carthain, Thar now needs to visit town for supplies. He is close to completing his rituals and no longer needs to steal goods from caravans.

He visits the temple of Gruumsh and claims he is in the area to test himself against the monsters that lurk in the mountains. He delights in stirring up angry crowds, confident that Hammerfast's laws will protect him. This part of the campaign is a great way to get the adventurers to really, really hate Thar.

Major Quest: When the adventurers defeat Gerrek, it becomes obvious that Grond is the force behind the Circle of Stone. When they turn Gerrek and the evidence against Grond over to the authorities, they receive 250 XP each.

Rage in the Streets (Level 7)

With Gerrek dead or captured, the town guard arrests Grond. A riot breaks out among the members of the Circle of Stone. Some attempt to storm the Black Spire, and others smash windows and loot shops. The adventurers must help bring peace back to the town. Specifically, they are asked to prevent the mob from storming the temple of Gruumsh and causing a bloodbath.

Campaign Hooks: The adventurers now have the chance to meet Baldreg, the priest of Gruumsh in Hammerfast. If the adventurers help protect the temple, Baldreg confides in them his suspicion that Thar poses a threat to the town. Thar has gained information about Calastryx from his research at the temple and from several of the lesser priests.

Major Quest: If the adventurers prevent a riot and protect the temple of Gruumsh without spilling any blood, they receive 300 XP each and the help of Gruumsh's priests in the next portion of the campaign.

Quest for Wyrmspike (Level 8)

Soon after the near-riot in town, Hammerfast is again cast into panic when a massive gout of flame and smoke erupts from Forgepeak. The dragon Calastryx has begun to awaken. With help from the sages in town, the adventurers must find the resting place of *wyrmspike*. This part of the campaign requires the adventurers to complete skill challenges to convince the priests of Gruumsh and Moradin to work together, and then to defeat the traps and undead guardians found in the Black Tomb. The succubus Pythrana also shows up with several devils and attempts to grab *wyrmspike* from the adventurers.

Campaign Hooks: At this point, you can complete Grond's story with a chance for redemption. He is horrified to discover that a succubus tricked him, and further devastated to learn that he nearly diverted the folk of Hammerfast from the true threat of the dragon. He repents, causing the collapse of the Circle of Stone, and gives the adventurers a map that reveals a secret route into the dungeon atop Forgepeak where Calastryx dwells.

Major Quest: The characters receive 350 XP each for finding *wyrmspike*.

Wyrmspike **Level 13**

This wooden staff is twisted and gnarled. It is blacked as if it was once cast into a great fire. If it didn't glow with a light-blue aura, it would appear to be a worthless piece of debris.

Lvl 13 +3 17,000 gp
Implement (Staff)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, +1d12 per plus against dragons
Property: You gain resist 5 against all close and area attacks.
Property: You gain an additional +2 bonus to attack rolls against the dragon Calastryx.
Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* You are the target of an area or a close attack. *Effect:* You and your allies gain resist 20 against the triggering attack.

To Forgepeak (Level 9)

The adventurers must climb Forgepeak, sneak into the dungeons there, and defeat Thar and his followers. Thar has completed the ritual to awaken Calastryx, but he must be stopped before his final ritual allows him to control the dragon. This is a classic dungeon crawl that also features a race against time and a climactic battle against Thar.

Campaign Hooks: When the adventurers defeat Thar, the mountain rumbles around them. In killing the dragonborn, they have freed Calastryx from his control. The dragon rises from the dungeon and swoops over the mountains.

Major Quest: The adventurers receive 400 XP each for slaying Thar, but now must defeat the dragon. The dragon spends a few days hunting in the wilds before attacking Hammerfast. The militia is helpless against the beast, and the town needs the adventurers to stand against Calastryx.

The Defense of Hammerfast (Level 10)

The campaign arc ends with a bang as Calastryx swoops down to attack Hammerfast. The adventurers must fight the dragon through the streets of town amid crowds of panicked residents.

Major Quest: If the adventurers slay Calastryx, they save Hammerfast. Everywhere they travel, they are hailed as heroes. They receive 500 XP each.

A treacherous bandit who lurks in the wilds around Hammerfast, Carthain is a thug and a murderer. Carthain works for both the Circle of Stone and for Thar, the champion of Gruumsh plotting to destroy Hammerfast. Carthain is a good challenge for adventurers at the upper end of the heroic tier.

Resources

Carthain and his followers consist of a mix of humans, halflings, and cutthroats of all races. They are vicious robbers who happily murder those that resist their attacks. Carthain leads one gang of robbers, and Serlek Undertow leads the other.

Spies in Hammerfast

Carthain employs a few folk to help him gather information he uses for planning his raids. His spies include Tarras (page 10), Kavik Torlin (an unwitting dupe; page 14), and Frenis Tallgood (page 12).

OTHER BANDITS IN THE WILDS

While Carthain is both ruthless and ambitious, he does not hold a monopoly on banditry and theft in the Hammerfast region. A few other gangs operate in the mountains, preying on lone travelers and small caravans.

The Rockguard Clan: This dwarf clan lives in a small collection of shacks southwest of Hammerfast. The local equivalent of rustics, they demand a toll of 5 gp or a cask of strong drink from anyone they catch crossing their territory. If the intruders refuse, the Rockguards trail them through the wilderness. At night, they attempt to sneak into the travelers' camp and steal whatever they can grab.

The Rockguards are crude, belligerent, and obnoxious, but they quickly warm up if given gifts of fine ale or food. If adventurers befriend them in this way, the dwarves adopt them into the clan. The Rockguards' camp provides a safe place to rest, and the clan can lead the adventurers to any of the locations on the wilderness map.

Joren Deathkeeper: An eldarin priest of Orcus, Joren prowls the road with a number of skeletons, zombies, and two acolytes of Orcus. A year ago, Joren found a tome, *The Book of Restless Hordes*, containing a ritual that will allow him to raise a small army of skeletons, zombies, and wights. He needs several thousand gold pieces' worth of *residuum*, along with weapons and armor, to raise and outfit his would-be army.

Joren prefers to arrange the zombies among the wreckage of a recently attacked caravan. When strangers approach, the zombies arise and attack while the skeletons and acolytes sweep in from the rear.

Serlek's Gang

A vicious halfling, Serlek was once a member of the Swiftriver Clan. He was exiled for murdering his brother, Kree, over a gold statue the two found in the wilds. He currently hides in the dungeon of the fire opal (page 6). He and the other bandits pose as treasure seekers exploring the dungeon. They offer to ally with adventurers and then try to kill them in their sleep. Serlek's followers include the following:

- gnome skulk (level 2 lurker, *Monster Manual* page 134)
- gnome arcanist (level 3 controller [leader], *Monster Manual* page 134)
- guard drake (level 2 brute, *Monster Manual* page 90)
- halfling slinger (level 1 artillery, *Monster Manual* page 152)
- halfling thief (level 2 skirmisher, *Monster Manual* page 152)
- human bandit (level 2 skirmisher, *Monster Manual* page 162)
- human guard (level 3 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 162)
- kenku warrior (level 3 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 152)

Serlek's followers are spread throughout several chambers, with the human guard and the drake assigned to watch the dungeon entrance. A stealthy party can pick off this gang of bandits one by one, since they are overly confident of their safety.

Carthain's Gang

The main body of Carthain's band lives in a small, temporary village set up in hex R-4, northeast of Hammerfast. Carthain and his followers have cleared a number of trails through the mountains, allowing them to move much faster than their pursuers. Carthain's gang consists of half-orcs, kenkus, and a number of humans, including the following:

- half-orc death mage (level 6 controller, *Monster Manual 2* page 140)
- half-orc hunter (level 5 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 140)
- human berserker (level 4 brute, *Monster Manual* page 163)
- human hexer (level 7 controller, *Monster Manual 2* page 146)
- human javelin dancer (level 6 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 147)
- kenku warrior (level 3 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 152)
- wereboar (level 6 brute, *Monster Manual 2* page 158)

JIM NELSON

Carthain and his men pose as prospectors. Their small village is heavily fortified, and they engage in some prospecting to pass the time between raids and to lend truth to their cover story.

Serlek Undertow

Carthain's lieutenant handles many of the raids on caravans near Hammerfast. Carthain accompanies him only when victory is assured.

Serlek Undertow **Level 4 Skirmisher (Leader)**
Small natural humanoid, halfling XP 175

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 55; **Bloodied** 27
AC 18 (20 against opportunity attacks); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 6
⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage, and Serlek shifts 3 squares.
⸸ **Vicious Slash** (standard; recharge ⚁ ⚀) ✦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Distracting Blade (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. Reflex; each ally adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when an enemy hits Serlek with an attack; encounter)
The triggering enemy rerolls the attack roll and uses the new result.
Combat Advantage
Serlek's melee attacks deal 1d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to him.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +8, Acrobatics +13, Bluff +10, Stealth +9, Thievery +13
Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Serlek in Combat

After a year of dodging patrols and having the upper hand in a fight, Serlek is intimidated by enemies who take the fight to him. He lurks at the edge of a fight, using *distracting blade* to overwhelm his enemies. He surrenders if his hit points drop to single digits and he has no allies remaining.

Carthain

A would-be petty noble, Carthain indulges himself with fine clothes and an elegantly waxed mustache. He is a cunning opponent who prefers hit-and-run tactics.

Carthain **Level 8 Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 350

Menacing Blade; aura 1; enemies within the aura grant combat advantage to Carthain's allies.
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 87; **Bloodied** 43
AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20
Speed 6
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.
⸸ **Hand Axe** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.
Whirling Blade (standard; recharge ⚁ ⚀) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +13 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.
Effect: Until the end of Carthain's next turn, each enemy who ends its turn adjacent to him takes 5 damage.
Nimble Footwork (move; at-will)
Carthain shifts 2 squares.
Villainous Escape (minor; encounter)
Carthain ends all marks that apply to him.
Combat Advantage
Carthain's attacks deal 2d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to him.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Goblin
Skills Athletics +12, Acrobatics +13, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Perception +10, Thievery +13
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+8)

Carthain in Combat

Carthain cares only for himself, and gladly sacrifices his followers to save his own skin. He focuses on enemies who appear to offer the least threat, leaping to attack wizards, invokers, and others in light armor. He leaves the big threats to his allies. If his hit points drop to single digits, he flees.

THE CIRCLE OF STONE

A conspiracy of fundamentalist priests of Moradin, the Circle of Stone poses the greatest current threat to Hammerfast. Led by Grond Silverstar, the second most powerful priest in the ranks of Moradin's church, the Circle unwittingly works to bring about the destruction of Hammerfast. The priests in its ranks and their followers believe that turning the necropolis into a center for trade is a grave insult to Moradin. Even worse, they believe, was allowing worshipers of Gruumsh into the town. Thus, the Circle works to drive the orcs out of Hammerfast and to destroy the Black Spire.

Of course, destroying Gruumsh's temple would violate the compact on which Hammerfast is founded. It would invite divine retribution not only from Gruumsh but also from Moradin, whose pledge to the god of destruction would be broken. The members of the Circle of Stone are unconcerned with this possibility, however, having been duped into believing that the compact is a sham.

Not all of the Circle's members are driven by zeal or work to destroy the temple of Gruumsh. Many of them are mere amoral opportunists, eager to make some easy money through robbery and extortion. Others agree that the folk of Hammerfast are too impious and disrespectful of the town's original purpose, but they have no desire to see their homes destroyed. They simply believe that allowing priests of Gruumsh access to the necropolis they once destroyed is a terrible injustice.

Goals

Outwardly, the Circle of Stone portrays itself as a force for morality. Its public facade focuses on the town's embrace of trade and profit over piety. Most folk think of the Circle members as humorless fundamentalists that want to turn Hammerfast into a theocracy.

The Circle values secrecy above all else. Even the low-ranking members who believe its cover story understand that they must keep their network a secret, the better to strike at the town's rotten foundation. Grond and his lieutenants make a point of stressing to their followers that Marsinda Goldspinner and the guilders are corrupt, vicious, and greedy. If the Circle were revealed, the guilders would stop at nothing to destroy it. Thus, secrecy is the Circle's greatest armor.

Of course, Grond needs secrecy to cloak his true goals. He wants to destroy the temple of Gruumsh in town and slaughter the orcs that dwell there. Once that is achieved, he can expel all nondwarves from Hammerfast and turn the town into a holy sanctuary of Moradin.

Grond Silverstar

Grond was not always such a fanatic. In his younger days, he was an earnest devotee of Moradin, and he and his family were prospectors scouring the Dawnforge Mountains for gold. Although they found several small veins, the Silverstar clan continued to press its luck, venturing farther and farther into the wilds for bigger strikes. One brutal night, a mob of orcs attacked Grond's family. He was the only survivor.

The priests of Moradin took in Grond, and he displayed an immediate aptitude for the priesthood. Grond had the potential to become a powerful force for good, had he not been targeted by the succubus Pythrana. Rather than physically seduce Grond, Pythrana lured him into a far deadlier downfall. She appeared to him in the guise of Berronar Truesilver, an exarch of Moradin. She told Grond that Moradin saw the pact that created Hammerfast as a temporary measure, one that would give the dwarves time to rebuild their strength while luring Gruumsh's followers into a deadly trap. Because Moradin must work in secret, he has chosen Grond as his weapon.

Thus, Grond is utterly convinced that his path is a righteous one. He desperately wishes to strike a blow not only for Moradin, but for his lost family. Vengeance will be his, and his god's apparent blessing makes it all the sweeter.

As it happens, the priests of Gruumsh do indeed plan to destroy Hammerfast, as unconvinced as the members of the Circle that the compact of the gods will bring about their destruction. A dragonborn champion of Gruumsh named Thar plans to awaken the slumbering dragon Calastryx and unleash it as a devastating weapon against the Nentir Vale. Grond's schemes do nothing to avert this disaster and only serve as a distraction from the true threat.

Grond is not given a stat block, because he isn't meant to be a monster for the adventurers to fight in battle. Instead, he represents a classic opponent in an urban-based adventure, a figure that the adventurers cannot physically assault without breaking the law. To take down Grond, the adventurers must gather evidence of his unlawful actions.

Members

There are two tiers of membership in the Circle of Stone.

Initiates

Initiates are those common folk of Hammerfast who support the Circle's outward goals. They want to restore morality to the town and believe that profit has

blinded its residents to Hammerfast's original purpose. They are noncombatant traders, workers, and crafters. Although they pose no direct threat to adventurers, they are ubiquitous in Hammerfast and act as a spy network for Grond in every ward in town. The initiates know to report any strange activity or suspicious folk, particularly nondwarves, to their superiors. None of the initiates knows of the Circle's true aims.

Hammers

The hammers are the Circle's muscle, whose zeal and physical strength make them useful for more forceful activities. The hammers harass businesses and other folk that Grond targets for destruction. They are generally the least pious of the Circle's members. Most of them are little more than thugs eager for a few coins and the chance to hurt innocent folk.

When running encounters with hammers, consider using the following creatures:

- dwarf bolter (level 4 artillery, *Monster Manual* page 97)
- dwarf hammerer (level 5 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 97)
- human berserker (level 4 brute, *Monster Manual* page 163)
- human lackey (level 7 minion, *Monster Manual* page 162)

In order to create more dwarf enemies for the adventurers to fight, take the humans listed above, give them *stand your ground* from the dwarf stat blocks, and then describe them as dwarf warriors.

Gerrek

Gerrek is a bloodthirsty fanatic. He maintains a low-key reputation as a quiet champion of Moradin, but in truth he leads the hammers. He also carries out assassinations on Grond's behalf. Although he appears to be devoted to Moradin, in truth he secretly worships Bane. He has two iron cobras (*Monster Manual*, page 157) and a pack of four iron defenders (*Monster Manual*, page 156) that he uses on missions for Grond.

Gerrek enjoys causing pain, and is Grond's prefered tool when it comes to dealing with troublemakers.

Gerrek fights to the death. He never makes a noise. Instead, he stares at the target of his *oath of enmity* with his pale blue eyes. Then follows up with punishing *splinter the formation* attacks whenever they are available. He saves *executioner's cloak* to use against the target he considers to be the most powerful and dangerous. Don't forget to use *censure the coward* as an immediate reaction whenever an adjacent enemy shifts.

Gerrek	**Level 7 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	XP 300

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 81; **Bloodied** 40
AC 22; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19
Speed 5

⊕ **Urgrosh** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage.

Oath of Enmity (minor; at-will)
Close burst 5; one enemy in burst; until the end of the encounter or until Gerrek uses this power again, when Gerrek attacks the target, he rolls twice and uses the higher result.

† **Censure the Coward** (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage.

† **Splinter the Formation** (standard; recharge ⚁ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 2d12 + 3 damage, and Gerrek teleports each enemy within 2 squares of the target 3 squares.

† **Executioner's Cloak** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 3d12 + 3 damage, and Gerrek is invisible to the target (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and Gerrek is invisible to the target until the end of his next turn.

Stand Your Ground
When an effect forces Gerrek to move—through a push, a pull, or a slide—Gerrek moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack would knock Gerrek prone, Gerrek gains an immediate saving throw to avoid falling prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Dwarven
Skills Athletics +9, Endurance +11, Intimidate +8, Religion +8

Str 12 (+4)	**Dex** 16 (+6)	**Wis** 18 (+7)
Con 17 (+6)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

THAR AND THE SLUMBERING DRAGON

High atop Forgepeak, a massive cave opens in the mountain's side. Long ago hidden by a powerful illusion, the cave is the current resting place of the dragon Calastryx. When the wizard Starris confronted Calastryx many years ago, the two waged an epic battle that spilled across the mountain range. The struggle ended when Starris placed a curse on Calastryx, forcing the dragon to slumber and slowly grow weaker. Although Starris could not defeat the dragon, he hoped that his final spell would mean its doom.

When the dragonborn champion of Gruumsh, Thar, discovered Calastryx's resting place, a new threat against Hammerfast began to emerge. Slowly but surely, Thar has managed to unravel the wards Starris put in place to trap the dragon. With each passing day, Calastryx grows stronger. Soon, the dragon will once again roam the Nentir Vale, burning and destroying all it encounters.

Calastryx's rise is by no means a sure thing. The staff *wyrmspike* can be used to defeat the dragon. However, it is hidden within the Iron Tomb in Hammerfast, protected (however unwittingly) by the paladins that haunt the ancient tomb.

Resources

Thar leads a small band of dragonborn and ogres. His band has also captured and tamed a number of griffons. Once mercenaries that ranged across the lands to the east, these killers now follow Thar in hopes of easy pickings. When Hammerfast becomes a burning wreck, they can pick among the ruins for the choicest pieces of treasure. Here are some suggested creatures to use when designing adventures involving Thar and his followers:

- dragonborn gladiator (level 10 solider, *Monster Manual* page 86)
- dragonborn soldier (level 5 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 86)
- griffon (level 7 brute, *Monster Manual* page 147)
- human cavalier (level 7 soldier [leader], *Monster Manual* 2 page 144)
- human dire beast hunter (level 9 artillery, *Monster Manual* 2 page 145)
- ogre savage (level 8 brute, *Monster Manual* page 199)
- ogre skirmisher (level 8 skirmisher, *Monster Manual* page 199)
- ogre warhulk (level 11 elite brute, *Monster Manual* page 199)
- oni mage (level 10 elite lurker, *Monster Manual* page 201)

Thar's warriors keep to Forgepeak, where they have fortified the entrance to Calastryx's lair. When they grow bored, they venture down the slopes to test their fighting skills. They are under strict orders from Thar never to attack folk from Hammerfast, but the dimwitted, greedy ogres sometimes forget that they should be seeking drakes, owlbears, and similar creatures, rather than caravans laden with food and treasure.

Thar

Thar killed his father in his sleep and claimed his weapons and armor. He then traveled the land, seeking weapon masters to teach him and then killing them to ensure their secrets spread no further. This brutal warrior dreams of becoming an exarch of Gruumsh before slaying the god of fury and taking his place.

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Thar **Level 11 Elite Brute**
Medium natural humanoid, dragonborn XP 1,200

Scorn for the Weak; aura 1; when an enemy within the aura spends a healing surge, Thar can make an opportunity attack against that enemy.

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 274; **Bloodied** 137; see also *death fury*
AC 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC (+17 while bloodied); 2d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 30). *Miss:* 6 damage.

⇶ **Menacing Eye of Gruumsh** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**
+15 vs. Will (+16 while bloodied); the target takes 1d8 + 5 psychic damage each time it attacks Thar (save ends).

⇶ **Dragon Breath** (minor; encounter) ✦ **Fire**
Clost blast 5; +14 vs. Reflex (+15 while bloodied); 2d6 + 3 fire damage.

⇶ **Sweeping Axe** (standard; recharges when bloodied) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 2; +16 vs. AC (+17 while bloodied); 3d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 42), and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage

⸸ **Brutal Finish** (standard; recharges when bloodied) ✦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC (+17 while bloodied); 3d12 + 10 damage (crit 2d12 + 46). *Miss:* Half damage.

⤳ **Winged Axe** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10; this attack does not provoke opportunity attacks; +20 vs. Fortitude (+21 while bloodied); 1d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 18), and the target is stunned until the end of its next turn. Thar's axe returns to him after this attack.

Scorn for the Weak (opportunity, when an adjacent enemy spends a healing surge; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Thar makes a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Death Fury
When Thar is bloodied, he gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls, but he takes 5 damage at the end of each of his turns. When he drops to 0 hit points, he does not die or fall unconscious until the end of his next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Giant, Goblin
Skills Athletics +17, Intimidate +14, Perception +12, Religion +11
Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 11 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 19 (+9)
Equipment hide armor, greataxe, eye patch

Thar in Combat

Thar laughs at his enemies, mocking them as they fall before his axe. When *scorn for the weak* triggers, he laughs as he hews his foes into bloody pulp while they desperately attempt to marshal their strength. He saves *winged axe*, a trick that incorporates a small amount of arcane magic he learned from a warlock, to take out spellcasters.

Thar's biggest flaw is his arrogance. He gladly wades into the midst of the battle, swinging his axe in a deadly arc. As he takes damage, his arrogance turns into panic. Before he dies, he shrieks, "You were supposed to die. Not me! This is not where my epic ends!" When he does fall, adventurers with keen senses just might hear the distant, cruel laughter of Gruumsh as he weighs judgment on Thar's deeds.

Calastryx

Calastryx was once the scourge of the Dawnforge Mountains. Although relatively young by dragon standards since it has been held in stasis by Starris's curse, Calastryx is perhaps the most powerful being within the confines of the Nentir Vale. During its battle with Starris, it suffered an awful wound that nearly killed the dragon. As part of the ritual used to heal and bind the creature, Thar infused the dragon with hydra's blood. The result is a three-headed draconic monstrosity that is slowly awakening.

Calastryx **Level 14 Solo Brute**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon) XP 5,000

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +19
HP 564; **Bloodied** 282; see also *bloodied birth*
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 27
Resist 10 fire
Saving Throws +5
Speed 6, fly 8
Action Points 2

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +19 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and Calastryx slides the target 3 squares.

⇶ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fire, Zone**
Close blast 5; +17 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 6 fire damage. *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of Calastryx's next turn. An enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 15 fire damage.

⤳ **Inferno Blast** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 5 fire damage.

⸸ **Rip and Tear** (standard; encounter)
Reach 3; three attacks against one target; +17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.

Multiple Threat
Each time Calastryx is marked, the attacker can choose one of the heads to mark. Marks affect each head separately. A head that is not marked ignores the mark's effects and does not trigger effects tied to the mark. Other effects and conditions, such as dazed or stunned, apply to all of the heads.

Triple Actions
Calastryx acts three times in a round, once for each head, on initiative counts 30, 20, and 10. It has a full set of actions on each turn and cannot delay or ready actions. It can use one immediate action between each turn.

Power of Three
Each of Calastryx's heads tracks the use of encounter and recharge actions separately. Each head has a full array of the listed powers.

Bloodied Birth
The first time Calastryx is bloodied, it sprouts a fourth head. That head has its own separate set of encounter and recharge powers. Its initiative count is 40.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant, Goblin
Skills Arcana +17, Diplomacy +17, History +17, Insight +19, Intimidate +17, Perception +19
Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 15 (+9) **Wis** 24 (+14)
Con 21 (+12) **Int** 20 (+12) **Cha** 21 (+12)

OTHER ADVENTURES IN HAMMERFAST

Although the campaign arc described in the previous sections highlights Hammerfast's past and its key traits, it is by no means the only adventure arc possible in town. Here are a few others to inspire your imagination:

- While the adventurers enjoy a cold drink at their favorite pub, their rest is interrupted when the ghost of a dwarf messenger bursts into the place. A dozen ghostly arrows protrude from his back. As he falls to the ground, a scroll tumbles from his hands and rolls to the adventurers' feet. The scroll is spectral at first, but it becomes a physical object as it bounces off an adventurer's foot. It contains a map to a lost dwarf outpost, along with a desperate plea for help against the Bloodspears. Does the outpost still exist, and what creatures or treasures are to be found within it?
- The Trade Guild hires the adventurers to stand watch over a warehouse during Siege Day (page 4). A gang of bandits decides to use the holiday as the cover for a raid on one of the warehouses in town. As the ghostly orcs overrun the town, the bandits sneak over the walls, creep through the streets, and make their attack.
- Bellis Ironoak is a merchant in town who runs a small shop in the Craft Ward. He hires the adventurers to look after his place while he journeys to visit his sick brother. Unknown to Bellis, an iron coffer he purchased from an adventurer was actually stolen from the Iron Tomb. That night, the ghostly paladins appear and demand that the adventurers hand over the item or face judgment. If the adventurers convince the paladins of their innocence, they are charged with venturing into the mountains, finding the person who stole the item, and bringing him back to face justice. The thief is a gnome wizard named Jenk who specializes in illusions. He and his small army of homunculi refuse to accompany the adventurers without a fight.
- A small gang of duergar sneak into Hammerfast through a long forgotten passage to the Underdark that emerges in one of the sealed tombs. The duergar pick off lone travelers and plot to bring troglodytes, orcs, and other creatures from the depths to lead an assault on Hammerfast. The adventurers are hired to investigate the disappearance of a merchant, a job that sets them on the duergar's trail.
- The ghosts of Hammerfast are disappearing. Each day, fewer and fewer of them are visible. Some folk believe that the ghosts are merely departing for the afterlife, but others whisper that the spirits seek to escape some terrible fate that hangs over the town. In truth, a cleric of Vecna named the Forgotten One seeks to uncover a long-hidden treasure within the town. He uses a net crafted from the wisps of a vampire's dreams to capture the ghosts and imprison them within small ceramic jars. With his wererat allies, a number of tiefling mercenaries, and an oni mage, the Forgotten One is holed up in a ruined tower north of town. The tome the Forgotten One seeks is said to point to the location of the tomb of Moorcar, an eladrin warlock who forged a personal pact with Vecna. The tomb is a grand library of forgotten lore.
- The adventurers are arrested and charged with a crime they did not commit. Although the victim remembers little of the crime, several witnesses have accused the adventurers of robbing a merchant and beating him nearly to death. In truth, a group of doppelgangers have slipped into town and committed a string of robberies. They mimic adventurers and other known figures to throw the authorities off the trail. The pickings in Hammerfast have been good, but the doppelgangers are now preparing to move on to a new town. If the adventurers talk and act fast, the town guard might agree to give them a chance to track down the real criminals before they disappear.
- A fire breaks out in town, sweeping through several buildings. The adventurers are nearby, and they can clearly see that several people are trapped in the burning structures and require rescue. A few days later, another fire erupts. If the adventurers investigate, they find that someone is unleashing fire elementals in town—possessed of elemental fire powerful enough to burn stone. A dwarf blacksmith is dabbling in arcane magic in an effort to perfect a new method of tempering steel. His experiments so far have proven disastrous and have unleashed the rampant elementals. The adventurers must find him and put a stop to his work.
- The adventurers are asked to investigate the disappearance of an artist. When they search her home, they find hundreds of paintings and portraits hung upon the walls. They have the strange sense that each of the portraits is watching them. One of the portraits is a trap that caught the artist. If the adventurers study that painting, they notice the artist's tiny figure painted in the picture's corner. A powerful art collector sent a magically trapped portrait to the artist in order to capture her soul. The collector, a brass dragon, now plans to dispatch a team of thieves to steal the painting. The brass dragon wishes to make the artist a slave, to produce masterpieces at the dragon's command whenever the dragon desires.

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